

THE LIVING AGE.

No. 774.—26 March, 1859.—Third Series, No. 52.

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LITTELL, SON, & CO., Boston; and DELISSER & PROCTER, 508 Broadway, New York.

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CHARLES LAMB.

CHARLES LAMB was born in Crown Office Row, Inner Temple, London, on the 18th of February, 1775. His father, John Lamb, had left Lincoln when a boy, and had come to London with as bright dreams and scarcely brighter prospects than worshipful Dick Whittington. He had entered the service of Mr. Salt, one of the benchers of the Inner Temple as footboy, and, eventually, so outgrew his livery and original position, that in his maturer years he had expanded, in the words of Elia, into Mr. Salt's "clerk, his good-servant, his dresser, his friend, his 'flapper,' his guide, stop-watch, his auditor, treasurer." He had married and settled in the obscure domain of his duties, laboring with patient assiduity to win his bread, and that of those who fed his heart with affection in requital of his toils. A son and daughter blessed the union of John Lamb and his wife. Nature seemed at first satisfied with the reproduction to each of one infantile object of peculiar affection, for the boy had become twelve years old and the girl ten, before Charles was born to revivify and concentrate in himself the love of all his father's amiable household. For seven years Charles Lamb resided in the seclusion of his home in the Temple; and then, through the patronage of Thomas Yeates, governor, he was admitted to the school of Christ's Hospital, whose cloisters, with yellow stockings and flowing blue gown, he trod until he was fifteen. Nature had denied the lad a masculine frame, as well as that selfish, domineering spirit which compensates to small boys for the lack of physical strength, and makes them commanders and governors of boys, as they often have become of men; but the gentleness of manners and the generosity of heart which characterized the Charles Lamb of the riper years, and made all who knew him love him, won from even the selfish young monks of Christ's Hospital the homage of universal affection and gentle consideration. The most robust and virile were conquered by his sweet timidity; the stern and bold respected his corporeal infirmity. Thrown into himself, by a defect in his speech, and constitutionally averse to those rougher pastimes, for which his physical debility incapacitated him, Charles Lamb indulged in antique fantasies, which were alike the result of all his associations and education, until his keenly observing and

amiable mind became like some old Gothic fane, quaint yet beautiful in its construction; elaborate yet fantastic in its rich and varied ornaments; with capacities for religious gloom deep as sacristy or shady aisle, and for a joyous light, sweet and softened as that which falls upon a marble tomb, through the medium of a stained oriel, upon a lovely mid-summer's noon.

Lamb's lingual impediment, which nervous agitation increased, claimed the indulgence of his teachers; and his sweetness of disposition, joined to an acute and powerful intellect, won their sympathy and respect. No harsh inhumanities, dealt out in the name of curatives, intermitted his thoughtful habits of boyhood, or added to the natural tristesse of his mind. The classics were his favorite schoolday studies; and the old English classics were the mental aliment of the man. His home, in whose sombre shades were embosomed the deep springs of parental and the greenness of fraternal love, was full of old associations; the hospital and school, in which he passed his most impressive years, were buttressed and roofed with ideas and memories of the past, and lent a bias to the boy's mind. Lamb's abilities and classical attainments marked him out at school for distinction; but the invincible stammer in his speech consigned him to sedentary drudgery and ignoble obscurity. While less able cotemporaries marched from behind him to the University, with their eyes illuminated with hopeful ambition, he modestly and unobtrusively retired to occupy the humble tripod of a scrivener in the South Sea House, where he passed a three months' apprenticeship, under the cognizance of his brother John, preparatory to his appointment to the accountant's office of the East India Company, which he obtained on the 5th of April, 1792.

Lamb's youth was passed in tenderly watching the declining years of his parents, and in gleanings rare thoughts with his sister, from the rich harvest of good old English authors, which constituted the library of his father's employer, Mr. Salt; and the even tenor of his life was sometimes interrupted and enlivened by a dinner with some of his old schoolmates, when the Cambridge vacations allowed of their return to London. These re-unions must have vividly recalled the memory of Charles Lamb's blighted prospects, but they never produced one visible sentiment of re-

gret; he had early learned to dissociate himself from all individual sense, save as a dreamer or a lover. The worldly, present or prospective, as related to himself, had no power to disturb his equanimity. His world of griefs and shadows was of the past; of the present he had none save the most kindly and generous thoughts. Upon one of those convivial occasions which occurred upon the 5th of November, Guy Fawke's, or Gunpowder Plot Day, Lamb's friends, amused with the flapping brim of his round hat, pinned it up on both sides, in the form of a cocked hat; and he, nothing loth, walked home towards the Temple in his usual sauntering way, with the fantastic sombrero on his head. As he was moving down Ludgate Hill, some gay young bloods, who had been inspired with loyal toasts, and whose imaginations were excited by errant aspirations against conspiracy, screamed out on beholding him, "The veritable Guy! no man of straw!" and, seizing him, they forthwith bore him back to St. Paul's churchyard, where they seated him on a post and left him. Ever after Lamb bore the name of Guy—a soubriquet at which he smiled, and in the humorous origin of which he found as much mirth as his less interested friends. Occasional association with the companions of his youth broke the dull current of the poor clerk's monotonous life, but it could not satisfy the yearnings of his soul; he must have something to admire, some luminary superior to his own light to shed a halo of love and sympathy around the years of his exile, from that sphere in which he felt, if he was not able to act, in which he deserved to be if he was not. His consciousness of intellectual power, humble and modest as that consciousness was, and the construction of his sympathetic mind, must have been fruitful sources of regret to him, as he contemplated those mechanical labors to which high intellectual sympathy was alone calculated to make him feel resigned. In Coleridge and friendship he found enough to satisfy him for his estrangement from Alma Mater, and for the extinction of his academical ambition. The "inspired charity boy" had been the object of his admiration at school, and he became the enthroned tenant of his adoration and love, when both began to tread the path of laborious life. The splendid genius, and glowing, generous enthusiasm of Coleridge touched with electric vigor the latent powers

of Lamb. The higher qualities of Coleridge's genius elevated and developed those of his timid friend, until they felt their own original strength and walked alone; and the friendship of Coleridge, whom he early recognized as one of the most splendid geniuses of his day, satisfied the aspiration of Lamb for intellectual distinction. It is to Coleridge's friendship with Lamb that the world of letters is indebted for one of its most distinguished ornaments. The great erratic genius, so full of vague thoughts and grand suggestions, has the honor of suggesting and producing one great and complete work at least, and that was Charles Lamb.

The incidents of Lamb's life, save one—one terrible and trying as ever man with generous soul endured—were nothing more than a succession of friendships with the most distinguished literary men of this century; the epochs of his publications; and those other common occurrences which constitute the casualties of every-day life. He toiled at his desk in the India House; read poetry and the drama with his sister; wrote letters to his friends; changed his lodgings from the Temple to the city, and from the city to the Temple; kept house at Islington; paid occasional visits to his friends in the country, and stuttered puns at the tables of his friends in the city; published poetry in concert with Coleridge and Lloyd; wrote quips and cranks for the daily and weekly papers, with essays for the monthlies; hissed his own farce at the theatre; and consoled unsuccessful authors, who were not blessed with his magnanimous philosophy; retired from the India House, after upwards of thirty years' service, with a pension of £450 per annum; died at the age of sixty, and was buried in Edmonton Churchyard. Such would constitute a complete synopsis of the grand elements of Charles Lamb's life, if that life had been apparent and superficial; but the annalist must search deeper and examine more closely for the lineaments and attributes of his exalted and heroic mind and character. The genius of Lamb was as fantastic as it was grave; it was as full of ornate beauties as of strange devices. He had nursed it in crypt and cloister, and had fed it on Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger and Shakespeare, until it took the form of the originals, and invested modern incidents with the drapery of an antique fancy. Lamb's knowledge of, and association with, modern authors were

real, vivid, and present; his own literary associations were old and ideal. His essays are full of the conceits of antiquity; they are rich, profuse, elaborate, and beautiful in style, though somewhat deficient in congruity. They are as highly polished as his wit, and sometimes as profound. There is no contradiction in speaking of the profundity of Lamb's wit. It was bright and apparent to those who were of similar habits of thought with himself, and who were familiar with his allusions; it often appeared to be licentious joking to those who could not penetrate into the arcana of his mind.

The form of Lamb's writings is old, because his ideas had all been moulded in antique forms; they are prim, formal, and grand in appearance, and can be individualized, as of an old date, as distinctly as the South Sea House, or the trim benchers of the Inner Temple. But the charm which vivifies and universalizes them is their plenitude and genuineness of generous affection. The warm emotions of the child live in the memory of the man, animating his quaint allusions and redundant comparisons, with the freshness and vigor of his own green, sunny heart. He revives in the affections of his auditors a love and reverence for the obsolete glories of England's Augustine age of literature, as a visit to Westminster Abbey restores in the capable mind the supremacy and beauty of Gothic architecture, over the more pretending but abnormal styles of modern masonry. You are not accustomed to Lamb's manner, in these unrecanted times, and, perhaps, you may never learn to love it; but the originality which truly constitutes style—the earnest, active, motive, thought, living and loving on the vital page—is sure to find its way to the sympathetic heart, and win in every reader a lover for "Elia." Sometimes there is a recklessness, an abandonment of glee and humor, in the pages of Lamb, which grave people might condemn and wise ones would have repressed; but let it be remembered that it was only on paper that Lamb could give full point and expression to the vivid and varied ideas that would move him. His jokes and puns died ere they fell from his incapable tongue, and he was too guileless, too good to conceal his humors. He was as free to reveal the erratic courses of his imagination as its more circumspect volitions. He threw from him the lighter bubbles of the human mind, as well as

the deeper essence of its stream. He was human, and did not see that the gravity of the philosopher was one iota more becoming the human countenance than the smile of the comedian. Both, he contended, were comprehended in the limits of virtue, and only differed in kind. Laughter was not denied to the human face divine, and might be nearer to wisdom than many of wisdom's pretended votaries supposed. He wrote as he felt, and, like all men, he felt differently moved at different times.

One of the favorite and common adjectives to the name of Charles Lamb is *gentle*. Coleridge calls him his gentle Charles, and everybody else has followed his example. Lamb rejected the application, and with reason. In one of his letters to the author of the "Rhyme," he says concerning this subject: "Don't make me ridiculous any more by terming me gentle-hearted in print. The meaning of gentle is equivocal at best, and almost always means poor-spirited; the very quality of gentleness is abhorrent to such vile trumpeting." Lamb's gentleness was of a lofty and spiritual kind, more akin to religion than poorness of spirit. He had been softened in the crucible of trial—intense, agonizing, and constant trial: and he had learned from childhood to regard the feelings of others as superior to his own. He was gentle towards men, and considerate even of their faults and frailties, not because he was afraid to rebuke them if need were, but because he knew and felt that he was frail himself. His gentleness was an honest, generous sacrifice of egotism and pride, which impelled him rather to suffer obloquy and unjust judgment than prove false to his sympathies and affections. No one more keenly felt the stings of injustice and the cuts of critical malice than he; but his was a heroism that would have rather endured the combined artillery of a dozen hostile reviews than have caused one friend a moment's pain. The political prepossessions of Lamb were not strong, their bias, however, was partly towards the grandeur of the past, and still more towards benevolence in the present. In his idealism, perhaps, he was a Tory. In his sympathies he was to all intents and purposes a "friend of the people." Political opinions, or any opinions, had no influence in recommending a man to the consideration of Elia. Of all things that existed beyond the cognizance of

tyranny, and the power of external domination, opinion in his mind was the most sacred and inviolable. Conformity was no evidence of men's uniformity of thought; dissent, however extreme, implied independence; so that Coleridge, Hazlitt, Wordsworth, Southey, Bernard Barton (the Quaker poet), and Godwin, were each and all dear friends of Lamb, not because of coincidence of opinion, but because of that generous, genial humanity which was common to them all, and which distinction of party could not destroy. No considerations of party or opinion could have arrayed Elia against any one of these in hostility of feeling; but his spirited letter to Southey, in the *London Magazine* for October, 1823, showed with what chivalrous self-sacrifice he could do violence to his own feelings, in defence of his friends, Hunt and Hazlitt, from the side thrusts of a Quarterly reviewer. Lamb's letter to Southey is the only ripple that disturbs the smooth tenor of his lifelong friendships; for even the perverse and passionate Hazlitt could not for a moment chill him or divert from himself the current of his warm affections.

Men and the things made with hands were, indeed, the chief earthly objects of Lamb's veneration. He had no passion for nature, save human nature, no veneration for scenic beauty beyond the walls of a city. He left to the poets and tourists all interest in the wild, scowling mountain, the black, yawning cavern, the moaning forest, and the green, sunny plains. The pensive old Samuel Salt, the stately Coventry, thin Twopeny, and meagre Wharry, had more charms for him, in the peculiarities of their physique, than giant Helvelyn and all its kindred mountains. He often wrote to his poet friends upon this subject of the city and rural life, and the following is the determined Cockney's deliberate averments to Wordsworth: "I have passed all my days in London, until I have formed as many and intense local attachments as any of you mountaineers can have done with dead nature. The lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet Street; the innumerable trades, tradesmen and customers; coaches, wagons, play-houses; all the bustle and wickedness round about Covent Garden; the watchmen, drunken scenes, rattles—life awake, if you awake, at all hours of the night; the impossibility of being dull in Fleet Street; the crowds, the very dirt and mud, the sun shining upon

houses and pavements, the printshops, the old bookstalls, parsons cheapening books, coffee-houses, steams of soups from kitchens, the pantomimes—London itself, a pantomime and masquerade—all these things work themselves into my mind, and feed me without a power of satiating me. The wonder of these sights impels me into night-walks about her crowded streets, and I often shed tears in the motley Strand from fulness of joy at so much life." Such were Lamb's emotions, and they were the true emotions of his nature. A city is insufficient to satisfy the cravings of the whole man, it is true; teeming as it is with all the varied excellencies of art, it is yet destitute of those God-created aspects of the beautiful from which the artist derives his aspirations, and art its form. The whole man cannot know development, if he only feels the warmth of a brick-shaded sun, and beholds the glories of a smoke-obscured moon and stars. Flower-potted rose-trees and boxes full of mignonette cannot compensate for the old primeval forests and the broad, flower-gemmed prairies; but still, the amount of man's nature, which urbane associations develop, is as much human nature as that which is nursed in woods and wilds and solitary places; and therefore Lamb's love of the Strand and the Temple seems to us to be as amiable and delectable, though less grand and poetical, than Wordsworth's love of the lakes. Lamb's character was eminently social, and if he made a visit to the country, it was not so much to gaze upon green fields as upon the face of a friend.

The most sublime view of Lamb's character, however, and indeed it is the highest of the morally sublime, is obtained by penetrating into his domestic sanctuary, and lifting up the veil from the deepest fountain of his heart affections. In the biographies hitherto published of him, there is a solemn and impenetrable silence maintained regarding the causes of Lamb's celibacy and his devoted attachment to his sister. That attachment and devotion were mutual, it is true: but in the ordinary circumstances of life, it was not necessary that a youth should suddenly forego all the hopes and endearments of wedded love, in order to devote himself to a maiden sister, who was ten years older than himself. The world knew that Lamb loved, and although he often alluded to his early attachment as a flitting passion, those who knew him best were aware that from no light and

transient feeling could spring the warmest expressions of his muse. The grave has at last closed over Charles Lamb, and that dear sister Mary, for whose sake he willingly sacrificed the dearest and strongest affections of the human heart. All the hearts that would have trembled at the terrible revelation are now cold, and all the cheeks that would have become bloodless at the recital, are now veiled by the green turf; and the world at last knows the fulness of that self-sacrifice, and the grandeur of that moral heroism which constituted the life of gentle Elia.

In a letter to Southey, recommending one of his early broken-down friends to the consideration of the author of "Madoc," Lamb makes the following allusions to that awful domestic calamity to which we have alluded, the murder of his mother, in a fit of insanity, by his sister Mary—that Mary who was the only sensible woman whom Hazlitt ever met—that Mary whose soul was as gentle and genial as that of childhood—that Mary whom he bore about with him in all his visitings, and who constituted a part of himself in all his friendships—that Mary whom he never went abroad with for twenty years, without a strait waistcoat in his pocket; the sister whom he fondly loved and tremblingly watched until his death, lest her terrible malady might again break down the barriers of her reason. "Poor —!" he says, in his own charitable way to Southey, "I am afraid the world, and the camp, and the university, have spoilt him among them. 'Tis certain he had at one time a strong capacity of turning out better. I knew him, and that not long since, when he had a most warm heart. I am ashamed of the indifference I have sometimes felt towards him. I think the devil is in one's heart. I am under obligations to that man for the warmest friendship and heartiest sympathy, even for an agony of sympathy, expressed both by word, and deed, and tears for me, when I was in my greatest distress. But I have forgot that, as, I fear, he has nigh forgotten the awful scenes which were before his eyes, when he became a comforter to me." The intimate friends of Lamb alone knew the meaning of this heartrending reference; the secret of the fatal catastrophe had been carefully retained by all cognizant of the fact, and even the notice in the coroner's record had been guarded from publication. It was this tragic occurrence which determined Charles

to break asunder all tenderer ties, and religiously devote himself to the care of his sister. What a melancholy interest does this fact give to the following beautiful phantasmagoria from the essays of Elia: "Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W——n; and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial meant in maidens, when, suddenly turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of representment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding and still receding till nothing at last, but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech: 'We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartram father. We are nothing, less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence and a name.'"

If the uncommon sacrifices which Lamb made for his sister's sake were worthy of admiration, the spirit in which he made them is much more so. The first little copy of his verses, which he published in conjunction with Coleridge and Lloyd, was dedicated to her; and all the tender endearments which he lavished upon her, seemed rather to flow from the depths of filial gratitude than fraternal sacrifice.

Of the dedication of his poems to his sister Mary, he says to Coleridge, in 1796, "This is the pomp and paraphernalia of parting," in allusion to his love, "with which I take my leave of a passion which has reigned so royally (so long) within me. I fling it off, pleased and satisfied with myself that the weakness troubles me no longer. I am wedded, Coleridge, to the fortunes of my sister and my poor old father. O my friend, I think sometimes, could I recall the days that are past, which among them should I choose? Not those merrier days, not the pleasant days of hope, not those wanderings with a fair-haired maid, which I have so often and so feelingly regretted, but the days, Coleridge, of a mother's fondness for her schoolboy.

What would I give to call her back to earth for *one* day, on my knees to ask her pardon for all those little asperities of temper which from time to time have given her gentle spirit pain; and the day, I trust, will come. There will be 'time enough' for kind offices of love, if heaven's eternal year be ours. Hereafter her meek spirit shall not reproach me."

In a subsequent letter, he alludes more particularly to Mary. "My sister has recovered from her illness. May that merciful God make tender my heart, and make me as thankful, as in my distress I was earnest in my prayers. Congratulate me on an ever-present and never-alienable friend like her." The force of these tender reflections, and the intensity of that concealed grief, become terribly affecting and sorrow-inspiring when the veil of obscurity is raised from the cause of their enunciation. The life of him, who seemed to exist that he might fuse men into love, and reconcile them to the cares of this world, by sharing their burdens of sorrow in the lightness of his own, was, in truth, a long and ever-acting tragedy, and it was upon the agony of his heart that its loves and joys were nursed. How mysterious and incomprehensible is the deep unknown! how feeble is the partition between the beauties and horrors of human passion! May heaven have requitted the self-sacrificing love, and soul-ennobling heroism of Elia.

The only portrait worthy of recognition that was ever taken of Lamb was executed by Hazlitt in 1804, and was amongst the last works of that beautiful painter, before he laid down the pencil for a grey goose-quill. The beautiful engraving that accompanies our letter-press sketch, is a transcript of Hazlitt's portrait. The following verbal limning is from the pen of Sergeant Talfourd: "Methinks I see him before me now as he appeared at our first meeting, and as he continued, with scarcely any perceptible alteration to me, during the twenty years of intimacy that followed, and were closed by his death. A light frame, so fragile that it seemed as if a breath would overthrow it, clad in clerk-like black, was surmounted by a head of form and expression the most noble and sweet. His black hair curled crisply about an expanded forehead; his eyes, softly brown, twinkled with varying expression, though the prevailing feeling was

sad; and the nose slightly carved, and delicately curved at the nostril, with the lower outline of the face regularly oval, completed a head which was finely placed on the shoulders, and gave importance and even dignity to a diminutive and shadowy stem. Who shall describe his countenance, catch its quivering sweetness, and fix it forever in words? There are none, alas, to answer the vain desire of friendship. Deep thought striving with humor, the lines of suffering wreathed into cordial mirth, and a smile of painful sweetness, present an image to the mind it can as little describe as lose."

In 1825, Lamb retired from the India House. He had long wished for his superannuation; but when it came, the charm of liberty had vanished with the idea of his drudgery. Age was beginning to lay its whitening hand upon his brow, and death to subtract from the number of his early friends, and even London was now becoming less necessary to his existence. He removed to Colebrook Cottage, Islington, where he maintained himself in rural state until his sister's health constrained him to remove to lodgings in Enfield, and finally to Edmonton. Cheered by the society of the orphan Miss Isola, whom they had adopted and reared as a daughter, Charles Lamb and his sister still maintained the earnest affection of their childhood, while the young maiden made up to Elia for the loss of the companionship in his rambles of his now feeble sister. But love, the bond of their little household's union, divided the triplex knot at last, which it had so auspiciously tied. Miss Isola was married, and now Lamb was left to walk abroad alone. In taking his daily morning walk on the London Road, as far as the "Bell at Edmonton," he stumbled against a stone, fell, and slightly injured his face. The trivial wounds seemed healing, when erysipelas attacked his head, and he died, placidly murmuring the names of Moxon and Proctor and others of his friends.

He died in his sixtieth year, in 1835, and was buried in Edmonton churchyard, where now slumbers the ashes of this most amiable and remarkable man. The world deplored his loss; for the world's best hearts had lost one of their best friends.

From The Quarterly Review.

Boswell's Life of Johnson: including their Tour to the Hebrides. By the Right Honorable John Wilson Croker, LL.D., F.R.S. A new Edition, thoroughly Revised, with much additional Matter. With Portraits. 1 Vol., royal 8vo. London, 1847.

MR. THACKERAY has remarked that the advantages of the literary calling are not sufficiently remembered by those who complain of its hardships. The physician must have house and furniture, carriage and men-servants, before patients will confide in him, for nobody is willing to trust in his skill till he puts on an appearance which indicates that he is trusted by others. The barrister must be at the cost of chambers and clerk, and the expense of going the circuit. The artist must have his studio and a constant supply of canvass and paint. The author, on the other hand, requires scarce any capital with which to exercise his craft. In large towns public libraries supply him with books, and a few sheets of paper, a pen and a little ink are all which are required to write them. He can live in a cheap lodging, and needs none of the costly appendages of the doctor, lawyer, and painter. Such is Mr. Thackeray's summary of the case, and it is plain enough that every calling has its drawbacks and compensations; but, when all has been said, it will still remain a truth that the worst profession in the world, for those who rely upon it exclusively, is that of an author. With the exception of a very few popular writers and editors of journals, no persons expend so large an amount of talent and toil for so small a return as the better class of literary men. Gifted persons, whose pens are hardly ever out of their hands, can with difficulty earn three or four hundred a year. Great as is the demand for books in the aggregate, the works of an individual have not often a sufficient sale to furnish much profit. If he chances to make a lucky hit, he can rarely repeat it. Those who make their way in the ordinary professions have a steady call for their services; the gains of the author, which are dependent upon a taste as variable as the weather, are always precarious. Though the public did not require incessant variety and were willing to go on listening to the voice of the charmer, he can seldom continue to charm as wisely as at first. Goldsmith urged the introduction of new members into the Literary Club because the original associates "had travelled over each other's

minds." This is as true of books as of conversation. Few men are possessed of an inexhaustible stock of ideas, and while in the ordinary callings increased experience gives increased skill, the author often finds in the very prime of his life that his occupation is gone, and that little besides "mouth-honor" is left him. But the chief evil, perhaps of his employment, when his bread depends upon it, is in the nature of the exertion it imposes. The craft of an artist is in a large degree mechanical, and to paint is usually as much a pleasure as a labor. The duties of a physician soon become a routine in which the intellect is rarely put to a strain. The barrister has his materials found to his hands, has the comparatively easy task of addressing the understanding instead of captivating the taste, and has the immense advantage of speaking to an audience far from fastidious and which is compelled to listen to him. Literary productions, when they have any particular excellence, generally flow with much less facility. They call for a more exhausting patience and a more fatiguing application of mind. Rapidly as Johnson seemed to write, he yet testifies that composition is usually an effort of slow diligence, to which the author is dragged by necessity, and from which the attention is every moment starting to pleasanter pursuits. No occupation is so tiring, none requires such concentration of the powers, and such a freedom from every thing which can distract the thoughts; none, therefore, is so harassing under the least derangement of health or circumstances. "A man," says Johnson, "doubtful of his dinner or trembling at a creditor is not much disposed to abstracted meditation or remote inquiries;" nor can any pursuit be so trying when poverty compels the toil to be unremitting; when "Day after day the labor must be done,
And sure as comes the postman and the sun
The indefatigable ink must run."

Half the works which delight the world may almost be said to have been written with the blood of their authors. "Ye," exclaims Johnson, "who listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy, and pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope, attend to the history of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia." With much more reason might those who think of adopting literature as a profession, seduced by dazzling dreams of affluence and fame, attend to the history of Samuel Johnson. Whoever weighs the sufferings against the success will

have little reason to envy his lot; and though he presents as grand a spectacle of a brave man struggling with distress as the world ever saw, the grandeur is felt by those who contemplate his career, and little besides the distress was felt by himself.

Shortly after Johnson settled in London, at the close of 1737, his chief employer was Edward Cave, the son of a shoemaker at Rugby. Cave had acquired some scholarship by his education at the grammar school of that place, and was now established as a printer and publisher at St. John's Gate. He had started the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and never, Johnson said, "looked out of the window but with a view to it." Such was his minute anxiety respecting it that he would name a particular person who he heard had talked of leaving it off, and would exclaim, "Let us have something good next month." Johnson spoke of him in later years with great affection, and described him "as a good man who always delighted to have his friends at table," but added, "that he was a penurious paymaster, who would contract for lines by the hundred, and expect the long hundred." However sensible he may have been of the value of his new contributor, whose articles, compared to the flimsy stuff which filled the journals of that day, were like jewels among sand, Cave does not seem to have relaxed his parsimony in his favor. The wages of Johnson were those of the ordinary literary drudges of his time, and the terms which conscious merit would have induced him to refuse, starving indigence compelled him to accept.

Most of his productions during the early part of his sojourn in London have not been traced. In 1740 his known contributions to the *Gentleman's Magazine* become more important, and it was at the conclusion of this year that he began to compose the "Parliamentary Debates," which he had previously been employed to revise. Persons were sent to the Houses of Lords and Commons to learn the names of the speakers and the sides they took. Sometimes his informants brought away notes of what was said, and from these slender materials Johnson constructed the finished speeches which appeared in the *Magazine*. His last, and upon the whole his ablest, effort of the kind, was his report of the discussion on "Spirituous Liquors" in February, 1743. He then desisted from the task on discovering what he had never before sus-

pected, that these effusions of his pen were supposed to be the true debates, "for he would not," he said, "be accessory to the propagation of falsehood." Though there could be no guilt where no fraud was designed, and though not a single ill effect was alleged to have been produced by the misconception of the public, his detestation of every thing deceptive was so extreme that a few days before his death he declared that the Debates "were the only part of his writings which gave him compunction." Their genuineness was long undoubted even by men who might have been thought to be in a position to hear the truth from the members of either House of Parliament. Three of the speeches were published by Dr. Maty in the works of Lord Chesterfield "as specimens of his Lordship's eloquence;" and years after the scrupulous moralist had abandoned the practice, Dr. Francis, the translator of Demosthenes and Horace, mentioned at a dinner, at which Johnson was present, that the reply of Mr. Pitt to the elder Horace Walpole in the "Debate on Seamen" in 1741, was the finest he had ever read—finer than any thing in the great Greek orator himself. The rest of the company were loud in their applause, and when panegyric was exhausted, Johnson exclaimed, "That speech I wrote in a garret in Exeter Street." This vigorous piece of fierce invective is the best burst of declamation he produced.

The excellence of the speeches may have done much to remove suspicion. It may have appeared more probable that they should be faithful reports than that they should be the composition of a magazine writer; but as Flood remarked, they are none of them in the least like real debates, and they are all written in one style, and that the mannered style of Johnson. The substance is just as much in his usual strain of speculation and moralizing. There is a vast amount of reflection, very few facts, and very little politics. His addiction to generalities is the cause why he displays in the conflict of opposite opinions less argumentative ingenuity than might be expected from his notable skill in maintaining either side of a question, and making the worse appear the better reason. When he was praised for his impartiality in holding the balance even between the contending parties, he answered "That is not quite true. I saved appearances tolerably well, but I took care

that the Whig dogs should not have the best of it." It would be impossible, however, from the debates themselves to discover his bias. Both sides declaim with equal plausibility of assertion and power of language. The pride of the author prevailed over the prejudices of the politician, and as every speech was in fact his own, he could not resist the impulse to put the strongest arguments and most forcible expressions into the mouth of the speaker. None of his works were written with equal velocity: "Three columns of the *Magazine*," he said, "in an hour was no uncommon effort, which was faster than most persons could have transcribed that quantity." Considered in this light, the composition is extraordinary. There is abundance of amplified commonplaces, yet intermingled with admirable reflections which are conveyed throughout in a polished and stately style, and in diction remarkable for its copiousness and vigor. Some of the speeches on "Spiritous Liquors" are finished dissertations on the evil effects, individual and national, of habits of intoxication, and would be supposed to be the result of unusual care.

There was once an idea of bringing Johnson himself into Parliament. Conceiving, as was conjectured by Lord Stowell, that, like the elephant in battle, so headstrong a champion might trample down friends as well as foes, Lord North declined to forward the scheme. Mr. Flood was reasonably of opinion that Johnson, at the age of sixty-two, had been too long used to the sententious brevity and short flights of conversation to have acquired the "expanded kind of argument" necessary in Parliament; but nothing could be less reasonable than to refer to the imaginary debates in the *Magazine* in proof of this position. Whatever may be their fault, it assuredly is not want of expansion; and they are essays and not speeches, exactly because they were written to be read and not to be spoken. At any period while his mind retained its pliancy Johnson could have had no difficulty in varying the treatment of his subject to fit their altered purpose. Burke pronounced that if he had come early into the House of Commons he would have been beyond question the greatest speaker that ever appeared there. He several times attempted an harangue in the "Society of Arts and Sciences," and told Sir William Scott "that he found he could not get on." He must

have meant he could not get on to the satisfaction of himself, for Dr. Kippis heard him speak there on a question of mechanics "with a perspicuity and energy which excited general admiration." Promptitude of mind was one of his most conspicuous qualities, and a little practice would have rendered oratorical contests as congenial to him as colloquial.

Like the dawning light which shows itself to the world before the luminary is visible from which it proceeds, Johnson's writings were admired long before he himself was brought into view. While he was penning speeches for eminent statesmen which eclipsed their own productions, he was not always able even to command a garret. About the time when he commenced the Parliamentary debates, he and Savage discussed politics one night as they walked round and round St. James' Square because they were destitute of a lodging. In high spirits and brimful of patriotism they continued their circuit for several hours, inveighing against Sir Robert Walpole and resolving "that they would stand by their country." By four in the morning fatigue got the better of patriotic fervor; they began to wish for refreshment and found that they could only make up fourpence halfpenny between them. Savage died in 1743, and in the following year Johnson published a life of him. This unhappy man was at once extravagantly proud and meanly importunate. He demanded alms with the air of a king who levies rightful taxes on his subjects, and thought to dignify beggary by insolence. Instead of being grateful for what was bestowed, he was enraged when any thing was withheld, and to have been once his friend was to ensure his subsequent enmity. The sums which were given him out of charity he squandered in profligacy, and passed his days between the fierce extremes of ravenous debauchery and squalid want. His conversation was doubtless the circumstance which recommended him to his future biographer. Johnson had never come within reach of the heads of his profession. Savage had herded with many of them as well as with various persons of rank. He was a close and accurate observer of mankind, had a singularly tenacious memory, and possessed the art of communicating his reminiscences in easy, elegant, and vivacious language. It may readily be conceived with what eager interest Johnson would listen to his traits and

anecdotes. What he saw in him was the companion of Pope and the describer of the many-colored scenes of life, not the vindictive spendthrift and abandoned reveller. Their companionship was of short duration, for it is certain they were not acquainted when Johnson published his "London" in May, 1738, and Savage left the metropolis in July, 1739, and never returned to it.

With so unpromising a hero, whose talents were not extraordinary * and the incidents of whose career were neither numerous nor creditable, Johnson produced a biography which, as Mr. Croker happily remarks, "gives, like Raphael's Lazarus or Murillo's Beggar, pleasure as a work of art, while the original could only excite disgust." The splendor of the author's mind reflected from the page redeems the inherent poverty of the subject. Yet the effect is not obtained by ascribing to Savage fictitious virtues or an imaginary importance. His ill-regulated disposition and ignoble career, if touched with tenderness, are described with as much fidelity as power. The interest springs honestly from the skill of the narrative and the reflections which are interwoven with it. The work was thrown off at a heat. "I wrote," Johnson said, "forty-eight of the printed octavo pages at a sitting; but then I sat up all night." It bears no marks of the haste with which it was composed; the style is not so harmonious and compact as that to which he had attained when he wrote the "Lives of the Poets;" but it is always imposing and often terse, and runs on in a full and equable flow from the opening to the close.

The copyright of the "Life of Savage"

* Fielding relates that the writings of Savage had long lain uncalled for in the warehouse till he happened, very fortunately for his bookseller, to be convicted at the Old Bailey of having killed one Sinclair in a tavern-scuffle, by running him through with a sword. The bookseller immediately advertised "The Works of Mr. Savage, now under Sentence of Death for Murder," and the whole stock was sold. The man next offered the condemned poet a high price for a "Dying Speech," which Savage accordingly furnished. When, contrary to all expectation, he was pardoned, he wished to return the money. The bookseller preferred to stand by the bargain. He published the "Speech" which Mr. Savage had intended to make at Tyburn; and Fielding says "It is probable as many were sold as there were people in town who could read." It is wonderful to reflect upon the circumstances which are a source of interest in the eyes of the multitude, when poems before neglected assumed a sudden value because their author was to be hanged for murder.

was purchased by Cave for fifteen guineas. No succession of masterpieces that it was in the power of man to produce could have enabled an author at this price to earn a subsistence; the money received for one performance would have been spent long before he could have collected the materials for a second. Thus Johnson was obliged to go back to his usual taskwork in which the returns were quick, however small. His employment in 1745 and 1746 was so obscure that with the exception of some "Miscellaneous Observations upon Macbeth," which appeared in the former of these years, no trace is preserved of his labors. Mr. Croker inclines to the belief that he had dabbled in the Rebellion and was obliged to keep concealed. To suppose that he was out in Forty-five, and that his journey to the Hebrides was not his first visit to Scotland, merely because we do not know where he was or what he was doing at the period, is an assumption too rash to be entertained. But there is conclusive evidence from Johnson's own lips that the conjecture is unfounded. He told Mr. Langton "that nothing had ever offered that made it worth his while to consider fully the question" of the right of the Stuarts, which he certainly would not have said if he had gone so far as to engage in the Pretender's cause. Boswell had heard him declare that "if holding up his right hand would have secured victory to Prince Charles at Culloden, he was not sure that he would have held it up." His Tory predilections were strong, but it is not likely that they ever hurried him into treason, or that his idea of "standing by his country" was to aid a Highland army to invade it. With a playful consciousness that they were destined to hold a conspicuous place in English literature, he remarked to Goldsmith, as they looked at the monuments in Poet's Corner,—"Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur istis."

On their return home through Temple Bar, Goldsmith pointed to the heads of the rebels which were stuck upon it, and slyly whispered in the ear of his companion—

"Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur istis."

The jest has a significance beyond what has ever been imputed to it, and must have been heard by Johnson with a shudder, if he had indeed made common cause with the men whose visages were mouldering above.*

* Ghastly as was this spectacle, it was less revolting than is commonly supposed; for the heads

In 1747 Johnson again emerged to the surface with the "Plan of his English Dictionary." His occasional productions while he was proceeding with his gigantic task were either few at the commencement or they have remained unknown. He furnished to Dodsley's "Preceptor" in 1748 a paper of about eighteen octavo pages called the "Vision of Theodore," which he penned one night after a festive evening, and which he once said he thought the best thing he had ever written. The ground of his preference is not apparent. The principal object of the piece is to hold out a warning against the contraction of evil habits. Of these he says felicitously that "each link of the chain grows tighter as it has been longer worn, and when by continual additions they become so heavy as to be felt, they are very frequently too strong to be broken." But the allegory is hackneyed, and displays little ingenuity or fancy. The precepts are trite, and are not set off by any novelty of form or illustration. If, however, the distinction of being his masterpiece did not belong to the "Vision of Theodore," he might with reason have claimed the honor for the work which he published in the ensuing year. This was his famous "Vanity of Human Wishes," which he composed according to his usual practice, with marvellous rapidity. He once accomplished a hundred lines in a single day. If Johnson were judged by what he has done best, his place should be among the poets. When Ballantyne asked Scott what in all our political literature gave him the greatest pleasure, he answered "London" and the "Vanity of Human Wishes." "I think," adds Ballantyne, "I never saw his countenance more indicative of admiration than while reciting aloud from these productions." As Scott asserted that the "pathetic morality of the 'Vanity of Human Wishes' had often drawn tears," there can be no doubt that this involuntary tribute had been paid by himself. Byron called it a "grand poem," and said, "that the examples and mode of giving them were both sublime." It is in a far more elevated strain than the "London." The ideas are of a loftier cast, the language is more nervous and poetical, and the characters are drawn with a force and splendor of descrip-

being coated with tar to prevent their becoming noisome, they were not more offensive in appearance than Egyptian mummies.

tion which are unrivalled. The sketch of Charles XII. of Sweden is the gem of the whole. The glow and fire and pomp of the lines which depict him in the pride of military glory, and the pathos of the lines which paint his reverses and his death, are perfect in themselves, and impress more deeply by the contrast. In almost every instance the English poet has soared above his Latin original.* Johnson coming after so many models has copied none of them in the construction of his heroic verse, which has a swell and majesty of its own. Without the various music of Dryden it is more sonorous, and fills the ear with its sound as it fills the mind with its pregnant sense. A few imperfect rhymes in "London" excepted, he has sacrificed nothing to the exigencies of verse. Neither Pope nor any other writer is equally free from negligent lines, or succeeds in the same sustained degree in combining the restraints imposed by poetry with the order and exactness of prose.

The fifteen guineas which Johnson received for the "Vanity of Human Wishes" was quickly followed by a larger sum than he could ever have possessed before. When Garrick in 1747 opened Drury Lane Theatre, Johnson furnished the celebrated Prologue. He now looked to Garrick to introduce the neglected "Irene" to the world. The name of Johnson was beginning to be heard. His "Life of Savage" was admired; his poems were thought equal to Pope; and his noble Prologue, which was several times called for during the season, had made him favorably known to the frequenters of the theatre. A tragedy from his pen was no unpromising speculation, and if his piece had been well adapted for the stage he might have appealed to the manager with as much confidence as to the friend. But "Irene" was too barren of incident to be an acting play, and when Garrick proposed alterations his old master took offence. "Sir," said Johnson to Dr. Taylor, who attempted to mediate in the dispute, "the fellow wants me to make Mahomet

* The opening couplet is the worst in the poem:—

"Let Observation, with extensive view,
Survey mankind from China to Peru."

He had to contend here with Dryden's consummate rendering of the original, which is as literal as it is admirable:—

"Look round the habitable world, how few
Know their own good, or knowing it pursue."

Johnson was cramped by the evident desire to avoid echoing a version which he could not mend.

run mad that he may have an opportunity of tossing his hands and kicking his heels." The tragedy was performed on February 6th, 1749, and ran for thirteen nights. Dr. Burney, who was present at the first representation, says that it was much applauded, especially the speech on "to-morrow," till the heroine at the close was about to be strangled on the stage, when there arose a cry of Murder! murder! It is singular that the circumstance which jeopardized the play should have been one of the few changes which the author permitted at the urgent solicitation of Garrick, whose object no doubt was to add another "situation" to a piece which was deficient in action. Johnson mentions of Dodsley that he attended every night behind the scenes during the run of "Cleone," and always cried at the distress of his own heroine. Neither the author nor any one else could have shed a tear at the frigid dialogue of "Irene," but he was always present at the performance, and thought that his new-born dignity required him to go equipped in a gold-laced hat and a gold-laced scarlet waistcoat. Beauclerk heard him relate that he soon laid aside his green-room finery for fear it should make him proud, and he told Mr. Langton that he found when he wore it he could not treat people with the same ease as when he was in his ordinary dress. The truth is, until he put on his dramatic livery he had never been possessed of a decent suit of clothes, and he was experiencing at forty the intoxicating sensations which others pass through at twenty-one.

The profits of the author's three nights were £195 17s.; which with the £100 that Dodsley paid for the copyright amounted to near £300. But Johnson, who had witnessed the increasing apathy of the audience, did not delude himself. He was aware that his tragedy had not made an impression, and when asked how he felt replied, "Like the Monument." The sturdy manliness of his mind was always grand. Some years after, when he was in distress, Murphy suggested to Garrick to invite his friend to produce another play. "When Johnson," replied the manager, "writes tragedy, 'declamation roars and passion sleeps;' when Shakspeare wrote, he dipped his pen in his heart." The words which Garrick quoted against Johnson from his own Prologue for the "Opening of Drury Lane Theatre" are not a little remarkable,

for the passage in which they occur exactly describes and emphatically condemns the very species of tragedy of which his "Irene" was an extreme example. He esteemed Addison's "Cato," according to Hawkins, "the best model we had." It was plainly the model he followed, and no less clear that he gave it the preference because it was in a style which was adapted to his own powers. But though the author was seduced into applauding what it suited him to imitate, the critic saw with truer eyes, and hence both in his "Prologue" and his "Life of Addison," he did not spare "the unassuming elegance and chill philosophy" of his master. No more perfect description can be found of "Irene" than in his strictures upon "Cato." "Of this work," he says, "it has not been unjustly determined that it is rather a poem in dialogue than a drama, rather a succession of just sentiments in elegant language than a representation of natural affections, or of any state probable or possible in human life. Nothing here 'excites or assuages emotion:' here is 'no magical power of raising fantastic terror or wild anxiety.' The events are expected without solicitude, and are remembered without joy or sorrow. Of the agents we have no care; we consider not what they are doing, or what they are suffering; we wish only to know what they have to say. There is not one amongst them that strongly attracts either affection or esteem." The plot of "Irene" is meagre and awakens no suspense; the incidents are few, unexciting, and not always probable; the agents are destitute of individuality, and appear to be mere elocutionists who have no identity with the words they utter. As the declamatory dialogue does not come from the heart, so neither does it go to it. The characters only meet to oppose sentiment to sentiment, and maxim to maxim, in set speeches, which even when fullest of "sound and fury" fall coldly upon the mind. The diction in spite of metaphors is prosaic, and the lines are without any charm of melody. His blank verse has none of that grand and massive roll which distinguished his heroic measure. A general monotony of sense, manner, and metre, without rise or fall, pervades the piece, and fatigues attention. He boasted to the audience that he trusted in "Reason, Nature, and Truth." Of moral truth, and moral argumentation, there was more than enough, but "Nature,"

as he said of his predecessors, "had fled," and "virtue and philosophy" had usurped her throne. He could not write any thing which did not show his command of language, but his tragedy shines with a pale light which neither dazzles nor warms. He once asked Mrs. Thrale which was the scene she preferred in the whole of our drama. She answered, "The dialogue in 'Cato' between Syphax and Juba." "Nay, nay," replied Johnson, "if you are for declamation, I hope my ladies have the better of them all." His high opinion of his play appears to have abated in after years. When it was read aloud in a country-house he left the room, and on being asked the reason, replied, "I thought it had been better."

His contact with the theatre led him occasionally to frequent the green-room, where he could indulge his favorite employments of watching human nature under new aspects and of joining in animated talk. "At that period," he said, "all the wenches knew me, and dropped me a courtesy as they passed on the stage." The players of his day treated indigent authors with insolence, and Johnson, who was among the most ragged and needy of them, had won from the actresses a courtesy of respect for his moral dignity and intellectual power,—a touching piece of simple and heartfelt homage, more to be coveted than a world of noisier applause. His next work raised him in the estimation of the public to something of the same position which he occupied in the eyes of the actresses. On the 20th of March, 1750, appeared the first number of the "Rambler," which contributed, beyond all his previous productions, to an elevated estimate of his character and to the spread of his fame. The necessity for earning something in addition to the instalments he received in advance for his Dictionary was the stimulus to the undertaking. Nor was he ill-paid. The work came out twice a week, and for every essay he had a couple of guineas from Cave. The pressing need to make the whole of the money with his own pen may have been the cause why he did not communicate the scheme to his friends and invite their aid. His desire to keep the authorship a secret is not so easy to understand. He published "London" anonymously while he was yet unknown, because, as Swift says,—

"A poem read without a name.
We justly praise or justly blame;
And critics have no partial views,
Except they know whom they abuse."

But Johnson's reputation was now sufficient to recommend his writings and would have assisted the sale. He may, perhaps, have thought that it would check the freedom of his comments if their source was known. Whatever was his motive, he was soon compelled to drop the mask. Garrick early detected his vigorous hand, and Richardson expressed his conviction to Cave that there was no second person who was capable of the task. "I return to answer," wrote Cave in August, 1750, when the idea of secrecy was abandoned, "that Mr. Johnson is the *Great Rambler*, being, as you observe, the only man who can furnish two such papers in a week, besides his other great business." He composed them, as he did every thing, upon the spur of the moment. The copy was seldom sent to the press till late in the night before the day of publication, and he usually wrote the concluding portion of the essay while the former part of it was being put into type. Often he did not even take the precaution to read what he had so hurriedly penned. A few heads of ideas upon certain topics, specimens of which have been preserved by Boswell, was all the preparation he had made. One of the memoranda he jotted down was "Sailor's life my aversion," and this Hawkins printed "Sailor's fate any man'sion."

"When the author was to be kept private," said Cave, "two gentlemen belonging to the Prince's Court came to me to inquire his name in order to do him service." Bubb Doddington invited the unknown writer to his house. Dr. Young and many other persons of note wrote letters of approbation; some placing the "Rambler" upon a level with the "Spectator," and some, like Richardson, pronouncing it superior. "The encouragement as to sale," Cave added, "is not in proportion to the high character given to the work by the judicious, not to say the raptures expressed by the few that do read it." He rightly augured that the completed series would have a larger circulation than the single numbers, for the topics were not of a nature to divert the ordinary purchasers of a twopenny peri-

odical. A moral tendency was perceptible in all the writings of Johnson; it was the main design of the "Rambler." Before commencing it, he offered up a prayer "that it might promote the glory of God and the salvation both of himself and others." He carried it on in the same spirit with which it was begun, and in the concluding number he professed that, if he had executed his intentions, his labors "would be found exactly conformable to the precepts of Christianity, without any accommodation to the licentiousness and levity of the age." He was not, he said, "much dejected by his want of popularity, for he only expected those to peruse his essays whose passions left them leisure for abstracted truth, and whom virtue could please by its naked dignity." Few of the persons under whose eyes they first fell were of this superior class. People complained that he had not adopted the lighter style and subjects of the "Spectator." He answered that some themes had already been treated with too much success to permit competition, and that an author must be guided by the course of his studies and the accidents of his life. This adherence to the bent of his mind gave the distinctive character to his work, and when its real nature came to be understood, and the world looked in it for what it contained, and not for what their preconceived notions had determined, they were loud in its praise.

In our day the "Rambler" has lost much of its pristine reputation. It cannot be denied that it contains many obvious truths delivered with pomp of phraseology and a magisterial air. The objection to the want of novelty had been anticipated by Johnson, who justly urged that men more frequently required to be reminded than reformed. His negligent age especially needed to be summoned back to their duties, and his lessons had a freshness and force to his contemporaries which, happily they do not retain for us. No one now would obtain the name of the "Great Moralist" for a volume of grave essays enforcing moral precepts. It was the singularity of the publication which procured the title for Johnson, and it was to the circumstance that the truths were addressed to minds which had long neglected them that they owed much of their effect. But the intrinsic power of the "Rambler" was likewise great. The triter portions are redeemed by the abundance of original and sagacious reflections, and it is

a marvel that papers written every Tuesday and Saturday, during the press of other labors, for two hundred consecutive weeks, should contain such weight and variety of sentiment. The most general complaint at the time was to the uniformity of the work. This was more perhaps in the manner than in the substance; when he changed his subject he could not change his style. He wrote letters in the name of female correspondents, and as Burke remarked, all his ladies are Johnsons in petticoats. He drew characters with a truth which led a club in Essex to imagine that they were sketches of the members, and they were incensed against an acquaintance whom they suspected of the act; but as all his representations were general descriptions in his formal style, without the animation of dialogue and incident, they did not contribute much to relieve the monotony. The chief contrast was produced by the few critical papers, which are novel and excellent, and it is surprising that Johnson, whose mind was teeming with literature, did not oftener avail himself of this ready resource.

In the summary of his aims in the final number of the "Rambler," he takes especial credit for his style. "I have labored," he says "to refine our language to grammatical purity and to clear it from colloquial barbarisms. Something, perhaps I have added to the elegance of its construction, and something to the harmony of its cadence." In what particular he could imagine that he had refined the language of Dryden, Swift, and Addison to grammatical purity we are unable to conjecture. There are slips of the pen in every writer, and Johnson is not free from them, but systematic license had not been left for him to reform. The other merits to which he lays claim have usually been numbered among his defects. His renunciation of familiar idioms gives an air of heaviness to his composition, and his love of sonorous periods betrayed him into verbosity and the use of a polysyllabic phraseology. There were people who said jocosely that his learned language was assumed to make his Dictionary indispensable. He has himself told his motive. "When common words were less pleasing to the ear or less distinct in their signification I have applied the terms of philosophy to popular ideas." The extent to which he carried the habit has been enormously exaggerated. The ordinary method of exhibiting his practice has

been to gather into half a dozen sentences as many grandiloquent phrases as are scattered through the whole of "Rambler," until all resemblance is lost in the extravagance of the caricature. The amplifications in which he indulged in his pursuit of a swelling harmony are both more frequent and more distasteful. While the mind grows impatient of a construction too uniform and mechanical and of phrases multiplied for no other purpose than to round off a sentence, the ear is no less tired by the monotony of sound. He said of Knolles, the author of the "History of the Turks," "that there was nothing turgid in his dignity nor superfluous in his copiousness." Exactly the reverse is true of the "Rambler," which occupies a middle place between his early and later works, and exhibits with his strength more of his defects than his previous or subsequent productions. He had formed his style by degrees, and when it had attained to the height of its mannerism, he began to perceive himself that it was too inflated. He shook his head when he had one day glanced his eye over a paper in the "Rambler," and exclaimed "too wordy." "If the style of Robertson," he observed on another occasion, "be too wordy, he owes it to me—that is, having too many words, and those too big ones." His maturer writings are masterpieces of composition. He became more familiar in his language, pruned his redundancy, and varied his cadence. As his style grew less cumbrous it increased in vigor till it reached its climax in the "Lives of the Poets." But literary praise or blame sinks into insignificance before the tribute which the "Rambler" affords to the moral greatness of Johnson. He was not a theologian or a recluse. He was a man of letters, mixing largely in the society of his fellows. The tone of conversation was lax, and his brother authors were not remarkable for their superior nicety. In the midst of license, both of language and conduct, he never relaxed the severity of his principles, and walked through miry ways without contracting the smallest stain in his passage. Writing for bread, he yet refused to accommodate his matter to the taste of his readers, and instead of attempting to entertain them for his private advantage, he persisted in instructing them for their own. Whether he is pictured in his garret, or mingling in the haunts of his acquaintance, we must be struck, when we turn to the "Rambler," with the heroism which could

triumph over all these influences, and persevere in enforcing the maxims of wisdom upon an untoward generation.

Amongst the panegyrics bestowed upon the "Rambler," there was one which was especially grateful to its author. After a few numbers his wife said to him, "I thought very well of you before, but I did not imagine you could have written any thing equal to this." Her cheering commendation was soon to cease. The "Rambler," terminated with the two hundred and eighth number on the 14th of March, 1752, and on the 28th Mrs. Johnson died. She expired in the night, and her husband sent immediately for his friend, Dr. Taylor, who found him in tears and extreme agitation. His sixteen years of marriage had not been years of felicity. He told Mrs. Thrale that he and his wife disputed perpetually. She had a passion for cleanliness, and Johnson, who, when on visits in his better days, would turn candles upside down to make them burn brighter, and allow the grease to drop upon the carpet, was not to be restrained in his own house. "Come," he would exclaim, "I think we have had talk enough about the floor; we will now have a touch at the ceiling." The food was a topic of dissension as well as the floor, and once, when he was about to say grace, she begged he would not go through the mockery of thanking God for a dinner which, in another minute, he would pronounce not fit to be eaten. But these little broils would not of themselves have embittered existence. The real evil was in the ceaseless contest with poverty which deepened his natural melancholy, and had probably no very favorable effect on the temper of his consort. According to Mrs. Desmoulins, who lived with her for some time at Hampstead, she did not treat him with complacency, and indulged in country air and nice living, while he was drudging in London. The sum, was, as he confessed to Boswell, that "his gloomy irritability" had never been so painful as during his married life. The latter days of Mrs. Johnson were epitomized by Levett in a single phrase—"perpetual illness and perpetual opium." In the sermon which her husband wrote on her death, she is described as passing through these months of sickness without one murmur of impatience, and often expressed her gratitude for the mercy which had granted her so long a period for repentance. Even at this distance of time,

when the grave has closed for three quarters of a century over the sorrows of Johnson, it is soothing to know that, in the midst of his miseries, the final days of their union were tranquil and full of consoling recollections to the survivor. If the course of events had not been favorable to their happiness, it had never extinguished their fondness. For years they had mingled minds and habits; the death of his wife disturbed the whole routine of his existence, and whichever way he turned there was a woful blank. He endeavored to dissipate grief by study, and it was observed that thenceforward he worked in a particular garret. When asked the reason he replied, "because in that room alone I never saw Mrs. Johnson." He outlived her upwards of thirty years, and to the last he kept the anniversary of her death with fasting and prayer.

Between March, 1753, and March, 1754, Johnson contributed a few essays to the "Adventurer," which he allowed Dr. Bathurst, a physician of inconsiderable practice, to publish for his own advantage. Johnson's poverty was then extreme, but his charity was never extinguished by indigence, and he loved "dear, dear Bathurst better than he ever loved any human creature." He repeated with strong approval an observation of Goldsmith, "I do not like a man who is zealous for nothing," and he liked Bathurst for being "a good hater—he hated a fool, and he hated a rogue, and he hated a Whig." Swift was of the same mind, and avowed it to be a ground of sympathy with Oldham,

"That rogues and fools were both abhorred alike."

But Bathurst could love as well as hate. He afterwards went to the West Indies, and in a letter which he wrote to Johnson from Barbadoes in 1757, after stating that he prays to "the Supreme Being to enable him to deserve the friendship of so great and good a man," he says, "excuse my dropping my pen, for it is impossible that it should express the gratitude that is due to you."

Cave, with whom Johnson had been so long connected, died in January, 1754. One of the last acts of the dying man, while sensibility remained, was fondly to press the hand of his illustrious friend. A sketch of the life of this worthy bookseller was Johnson's only publication after the "Adventurer" stopped, till the "Dictionary" appeared in 1755. An incident which had little effect upon the current of his

existence, but which is one of the famous passages in his history, was occasioned by the announcement of the work. He had dedicated the "Plan" to Lord Chesterfield, and received from him ten guineas, which was the usual fee paid by noble or wealthy persons for the compliment. In an interview with Johnson he showed him particular courtesy and made great professions to him. He kept none of them, but for seven years took no notice of him whatever, and then, when the Dictionary was on the eve of coming out, wrote a couple of papers in the "World" in commendation of the scheme and its author. Whether this was the conduct which was fitting from a man in Lord Chesterfield's position to a genius like Johnson, with whom he had entered into relations, whom he had promised to countenance, and with whose signal merits and depressed condition he was fully conversant, every person can determine from his own feeling of what is generous or just. The haughty independence of Johnson could not brook a slight, and he would not accept a little public praise as a compensation for deliberate and persevering private neglect. He wrote his celebrated letter to Lord Chesterfield, and renounced a patron who "could look with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he had reached ground, encumbered him with help." Warburton, who was personally unknown to Johnson, sent a message through a common acquaintance to tell him that he honored him for his manly behavior.

He had undertaken to complete the "Dictionary" in three years, and afterwards maintained that he could have done it easily in two if his health had not received several shocks during the period. The protraction of the work through seven years was trying to the booksellers, and when the messenger returned from carrying the last sheet to Millar, Johnson inquired what he had said. "Sir," answered the man, he said "Thank God I have done with him." "I am glad," rejoined Johnson with a smile, "that he thanks God for any thing." Even to have finished the work in the time which he actually took was a prodigious feat. A book so vast upon a subject of indefinite extent, could not, as he was careful to proclaim, be perfect, and is to be judged by its general characteristics and not by particular defects. The etymologies are allowed to be the least satisfactory portion of the per-

formance, though those who have remarked how little improvement has since been made upon them, will be inclined to rate them higher than is commonly done. The interpretations of the words, if faulty in some instances, are more uniformly admirable than could, perhaps, have been produced by any other person. Johnson excelled in lucid explanation and exact definitions. The thought required for the purpose was very great, and he asserted that his mind was more on the stretch in compiling his Dictionary than in composing his poetry. The selection of examples was made with such a regard to their intrinsic excellence that Lord Brougham says the work is as interesting to read as it is useful to consult, and Malone considered its "Beauties" would form a pleasing volume by themselves. He was influenced in the choice of the authors he quoted by their religious opinions. "I would not," he said to Mrs. Thrale, "send people to look for words in a book that might mislead them forever." He even refused to cite Samuel Clarke because he was not entirely orthodox, though he read his sermons much in his latter days, and recommended them when he was dying for their fulness on the propitiatory sacrifice. His Dictionary, with its manifold merits, was put together "amidst inconvenience and distraction, amidst sickness and sorrow," when the calls of the press would not permit him to linger, and supply the defects of to-day by the research of to-morrow. As no one man could be conversant with the vocabulary of every art, science, and trade, he prepared the public in his preface to expect "a few wild blunders and risible absurdities." A lady asked him how he came to define *pastern* the *knee* of a horse, and he answered, "Ignorance, madam, pure ignorance." After the Dictionary of the French Academy had for two centuries undergone the revision of successive generations of the famous "forty," M. Arago entertained the Chamber of Deputies by exposing the absurd explanation it contained of some of the commonest terms of science.

The glow of satisfaction which animates the mind at the conclusion of a laborious undertaking was not felt by Johnson. Since the death of his wife he seemed to himself broken off from mankind—a gloomy gazer on a world to which he had little relation. To this he made an affecting allusion both in his letter to Lord Chesterfield and in the preface to his

Dictionary. "The notice," he said in the first, "which you have been pleased to take of my labors, if it had been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent and cannot enjoy it, till I am solitary and cannot impart it, till I am known and do not want it." "I have protracted my work," he said in the second, "till most of those whom I wished to please have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds. I therefore dismiss it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure or praise." One of the departed friends whom he had wished to please was Edward Cave. Johnson had been countenanced by him in his obscurity, and was anxious that the publisher should witness his triumph. There had been reciprocal benefit and reciprocal obligation, which produced mutual esteem. Whatever might now be the lethargy of his mind, the pressure of poverty would not permit him to remain long inactive. The purchase money of his Dictionary was all spent before the work was complete. The sum he received for it was £1,575, which was at the rate of £225 a year; but as he had to buy books and paper and to pay the wages of six amanuenses who transcribed the authorities, the profit to himself was small indeed. His assistants often then, and afterwards, were pensioners upon his bounty, and encroached upon his own small share of the gain. "He had little," said his servant Francis Barber, "for himself, but frequently sent money to Mr. Shiels when in distress." Johnson later describes one of these humble associates as sitting starving for years by the bed of a sick wife, condemned by poverty to personal attendance, and by the necessity of attendance chained down to poverty. His wife sank at last, and before she was in her grave her husband followed her. Both were buried at the expense of Johnson. It is only here and there that we catch a sight of the domestic interior of the poor journeymen of literature, "who live men know not how, and die obscure men mark not when," and what tragedies of life does the glance reveal!

Johnson did not complain of his bargain. Boswell once expressed a regret to him that he did not get more for his Dictionary. "I am sorry," he said, "too. But it was very well; the booksellers are generous, liberal-minded men." At another time he said of the principal proprietor, "I respect, Millar,

sir; he has raised the price of literature." Far, indeed, from thinking himself underpaid, it was the boast of Johnson that the next generation should not accuse him of having let down the wages of authorship. He always maintained that he had met with his deserts. He asserted, with especial reference to himself, that he never knew a man of merit neglected, and that all the accusations which were made against the world were unjust. This may not be universally true, but it is certain that those who deserve the most whine the least. The man who cries out that he is neglected, usually merits the neglect with which he meets. "I hate," said Johnson, "a complainer." People of his stamp have minds superior to fortune, and as he observed of Shakespeare in his low estate, "shake off its incumbrances like dew-drops from the lion's mane."

Fortune was certainly not kind to him at this crisis. In March, 1756, he was arrested for a debt of £5 18s., and applied for assistance to Richardson, the novelist, who immediately responded to the appeal. Never callous to the distress of others in the midst of his own, he in the same year contributed to the *Universal Visitor*, for the purpose of helping poor Christopher Smart, who was one of the editors, and was then out of his mind. For a certain share of the profits of this monthly miscellany the poet bound himself to a bookseller to write nothing else for ninety-nine years; and Johnson was ignorant of the contract when he benevolently consented to hold the pen for his lunatic friend. "I hoped," he said, "his wits would soon return to him. Mine returned to me, and I wrote in the *Universal Visitor*, no longer." He began, however, in May, to write on his own account for a new periodical, called the *Literary Magazine*. It was here that appeared his masterly review of the essay of Soame Jenyns, on the "Origin of Evil," which he exposed with a force of sarcastic argument, that while it confuted the theory, rendered its author ridiculous. Jenyns kept silence as long as his antagonist lived; and thirty years afterwards, when he was dead, revenged himself in a puny epitaph in verse. In addition to his other fugitive pieces Johnson wrote discourses for clergymen, and prefaces and dedications for authors. His price for a sermon was a guinea, and it took him only from dinner to post-time to earn it.

Fame is a luxury, bread a necessity, and he was willing to make money by any method, however humble, provided it was honest. All his contrivances did not prevent his sinking lower in his circumstances. The father of Mr. Langton offered, if he would take orders, to present him to a living of considerable value. "I have not," he replied "the requisites for the office, and I cannot in conscience shear the flock which I am unable to feed." "Sir," he said to his old fellow-collegian Edwards, who was sighing for what he called the easy life of a parson, "the life of a parson is not easy. No, sir, I do not envy a clergyman's life as an easy life, nor do I envy the clergyman who makes it an easy life." The retirement would have been as fatal to Johnson as the occupation was distasteful. His malady required the dissipating influence of society to keep it at bay; and his melancholy, in the stagnation of rural existence, would have passed into madness. He preferred to endure the evils of the scholar's lot, and continued, as Murphy says, to pass his days "in poverty and the pride of literature." This, in the main, was the life he led for a quarter of a century; but what can enable us to form an idea of the units of misery which made up the compound sum—to realize the long-drawn bitterness of the waters of affliction as they fell drop by drop, day by day, without intermission or abatement?

He issued proposals in 1756 for an edition of "Shakespeare," to be published by subscription; and as he wrote little of any moment in 1757, he probably lived upon the payments which were made in advance by his patrons. A young bookseller, who carried him the stipulated sum, on behalf of a gentleman, asked if he would take down the address, that the name might be inserted in the list of subscribers. "Sir," replied Johnson, "I have two very cogent reasons for not printing a list of subscribers: one, that I have lost all the names; the other, that I have spent all the money." This resource, which might answer very well while the scheme was new, and names came in thick, could not serve him long, and in April, 1758, he commenced "The Idler," which appeared every Saturday in the *Universal Chronicle*, a weekly newspaper. The demands upon his time were not near so great as when he wrote his "Rambler," and as his present

papers were shorter, he had less than half the quantity to produce; but whether he was busy or at leisure, had to write little or much, his method was the same, which was to execute the work when it was wanted, and not an instant before. He asked Langton one evening, at Oxford, how long it was to post-time, and being told half an hour, he exclaimed, "then we shall do very well." Upon this he scribbled off an "Idler," which Langton expressed a desire to read. "Sir," said Johnson, as he folded it up, "you shall not do more than I have done myself." Company never checked his facility of composition. Mrs. Gastrell had often known the printer's boy come to a house where Johnson visited for copy for the "Rambler," when he would sit down at once in a room full of people and write an essay as readily as he would have written a reply to a note of invitation. A large part of the "Lives of the Poets" was composed at Stow Hill, at a table where several ladies were talking, and much of the remainder at his London lodging when George Steevens was in the room.

The "Idler" is traced with a lighter hand than the "Rambler." But if the style is less tumid, the sentiments are in general less important. Far more passages embodying valuable truths in felicitous language could be collected from the early than from the later publication, which never attained the same reputation as its predecessor. While the series was in progress, he threw off in the evenings of a single week a work which far eclipsed the combined papers of the "Idler"—the products though they were of two entire years. This was "Rasselas," which was written in the spring of 1759 to defray the debts of his mother and pay the expenses of her funeral. Ardent as was his affection for her, it is believed that he had never seen her since he removed to London—a space of more than twenty years. He told Mr. Langton, after the completion of the Dictionary, that she had counted the days for its publication, in the hope that he would then be free to visit her, and he expressed his resolution of going to Lichfield the moment he could extricate himself from his London engagements. The hour when he had spare time or spare money never arrived, and in January, 1759, she expired at ninety years of age. On hearing of her illness, Johnson wrote her a letter commencing "Honored Madam," which

was followed by others, in which he addressed her as "Dear honored Mother." These touching effusions of his heart are a striking testimony to the tenderness of his affection, for they are not in the least in his usual style, and seem more like the infantine fondness of a child that has never left its mother's side, than the expressions of a strong-minded man of fifty, who had been beating from youth about the world. He was so disturbed by the news of her death that he sent for Dr. Maxwell, the assistant preacher at the Temple, to help him to compose his agitated mind. In the last week of his life he burnt the letters he had received from her, and when they were consumed he shed a flood of tears. She was waited on in her illness by one Catherine Chambers, who had served her for upwards of thirty years. To this faithful attendant Johnson sent grateful messages, thanking her for her care of her mistress, expressing his value for her, and promising her his protection. In 1767, when her turn came to die, the great man was on a visit at Lichfield, and went to take leave forever of his dear old friend. The scene which ensued is described by himself in a diary never intended to be published. He sent away the attendants, told her that as Christians they ought to part with prayer, and having offered up a brief and fervent petition on her behalf, kissed her dying lips. "She said," he goes on, "that to part was the greatest pain she had ever felt, and that she hoped we should meet again in a better place. I expressed, with swelled eyes and great emotion of tenderness, the same hope. We kissed and parted—I humbly hope, to meet again and to part no more." Hardly a man could be found who, with his eminence and in his position, would have shown this fondness to an old domestic on account of the associations derived from her attention to his departed mother. Johnson hated the cant of sentiment, and the parade of feeling. He kept his griefs to himself, and we know them chiefly from the undesigned evidence of a few hasty memoranda.

If the same kind of interest was expected in "Rasselas," as is found in a novel, it would be quickly flung aside. In its general structure it has all the defects of "Irene." There are not many incidents, and nothing which deserves the name of a plot. The story is laid in the East; but no attempt is made to impart a local coloring to the scene. The

agents are speaking puppets, without distinctive attributes; for though Johnson had an insight into nature, he had no capacity for making persons act and converse in character. All ranks and professions declaim in the same polished and ethical strain; the princess talks as sagely as the philosopher, the maid as elegantly as her mistress, and none of them talk the language of life. "Rasselas," in fact, is the "Rambler" in dialogue. In this aspect it is a work of great beauty and power. There are fewer commonplaces than in his essays, and the style is more chastened and condensed. Aphoristic wisdom has seldom been delivered in such finished and pointed sentences. In a long work sententious maxims, unrelieved by moving accidents and the play of natural conversation, would produce satiety; but he luckily stopped before the force of his lessons was weakened by repetition. Description is not the characteristic of "Rasselas," but there is one example of it which is especially excellent. The languor and tedium of the luxurious life in the "Happy Valley," where there is nothing to hope or to fear, are painted with a power which realizes the sensation to the mind, and creates an oppressive, stifling feeling. The purpose of the story was well summed up by a lady, who remarked to Boswell, that it was a "Vanity of Human Wishes" in prose. It is a fault in the execution of Johnson's design, that he for the most part carries the Prince through scenes which do not exhibit the ordinary occupations of mankind, and he therefore fails to lay sufficient ground for his inference that happiness is nowhere to be found. The knowledge which he had acquired in his London life of the trials to which persons of all professions were exposed, would have enabled him to depict their hardships with unusual distinctness, and it is curious that he did not draw more upon his own ample experience, and add at once to the force of his moral and the interest of his tale. It is singular, too, that after showing the impotence of earthly pursuits to confer peace, he should have omitted to proclaim, what we know was the dearest conviction of his mind, that religion would yield the felicity which is fruitlessly sought for elsewhere. "The conclusion in which nothing is concluded" is the title of his final chapter, and is a barren result to which to conduct the inquirer.

Of all the examples of Johnson's rapid

composition, "Rasselas" is the most extraordinary, when the elaborate polish of the style is considered. In his *Life of Pope*, he observes that some authors shape a large amount of matter by continued meditation, and only write their productions when they have completed them. This is said to have been his own method. Bishop Percy had often heard him forming periods in low whispers when careless observers thought he was muttering prayers. His short sight, which obliged him to hold his paper close to his face, made it irksome to him to write, while his retentive memory made it easy for him to retain what he had once conceived. Thus Percy supposes that he brought his pieces to the highest correctness, and then poured them out in the mass. It is certain that he pursued this plan to a considerable extent, which takes something from the marvel of his apparent readiness; but nobody can imagine that he had all "Rasselas" by heart, or that he did otherwise than clothe a large part of the thoughts in the language of the moment. As he was above the charlatanery of pretending to a facility he did not possess, a remark which he made to Boswell is decisive. "When a man," he said, "writes from his own mind, he writes very rapidly. The greatest part of a writer's time is spent in reading in order to write; a man will turn over half a library to make one book." If, however, he did not complete his compositions before he put them upon paper, he was gathering fresh ideas while his pen was idle, and his understanding was regaining its pristine vigor during his fits of inactivity. He wrote fast and well under pressure, because he did not come to his work with a jaded intellect, wearied and enfeebled by previous toil.

"Rasselas" answered its primary end, of supplying Johnson with money. He sold it for a hundred pounds, and got twenty-five more when it came to a second edition. His expenses were reduced by the death of his wife and mother, and he appears to have diminished his literary labors in the same proportion. There is indeed the express testimony of Murphy, who knew him at this time, that he lived in total inaction. "Want," he says in one of his essays, "always struggles against idleness, but want itself is often overcome; and every hour shows the careful observer those who had rather live in ease than plenty." The "Idler" stopped on the 5th of April, 1760, and except a few slight

pieces, such as a preface or dedication, he published nothing more till after the memorable period which placed him at last above the alternative of perpetual privation or perpetual toil. Mr. Wedderburne suggested to the Prime Minister, Lord Bute, to confer upon him a pension, and a grant was accordingly made to him, in 1762, of £300 a year. It is a remarkable illustration of the lofty spirit he had preserved throughout his adversity, that the man who had asked the favor did not dare to communicate his success for fear the proud independence of Johnson should resent it as an insult. Arthur Murphy undertook the task at Wedderburne's request. The message was disclosed by slow and studied approaches. When Johnson at length comprehended the fact he made a long pause, then asked if it was seriously intended, and again fell into a profound meditation. He was thinking, we may be sure, of the terrible struggle he was maintaining with poverty, for his chambers, Murphy says, were the abode of wretchedness; he was thinking of the rare felicity of a competence which would enable him at once to exchange misery for comfort; and he was thinking, as we know, whether it was fitting for him to accept the proffered bounty, and whether he ought not to prefer the pittance which he earned to the pounds which were a gift. But he had earned his pounds ten thousand times over; he had been a benefactor to the nation, and it was not just that the nation should leave him to starve. A great general is pensioned because the laurels which are reaped by the sword seldom bear much substantial fruit. A great writer who instructs and delights mankind is certainly as deserving as he who slays them; and as literature had not brought Johnson an adequate reward, he had as indisputable a claim to the small annuity bestowed upon him as any man has to the wages he receives for the work he has done. Better days have since dawned upon authors, but if they were as needy now as they were a hundred years ago, the Johnsons are not so numerous as to create an apprehension that their pensions would impoverish the national exchequer.

In spite of his rags and his garret, his didactic matter and unfashionable opinions, the stately censor of morals had already become, both with authors and public, the acknowledged head of the literary world. He had won the station by the sheer force of a

powerful intellect which paid tribute to nothing but its own conclusions, and made him march right onwards regardless alike of persons and circumstances. Murphy describes him some years before his pension, as being waited on day after day by a crowd of poor authors who looked up to him as their oracle. He heard their schemes and complaints, and dealt out from the chair of authority his criticisms and advice. What a testimony is this to his honesty, his benevolence, and his mental supremacy! What a proud position, to be raised with tacit unanimity to the dictatorship in the midst of his beggary by the jealous population of Grub Street, who clung to him as their prop, like ivy gathered round an oak! His friendships with his great contemporaries may present a more imposing but not so touching a spectacle. His intimacies with these peers in fame had equally grown up in his needy time. Among his bosom companions, he could boast in Garrick, the greatest actor England ever saw, in Reynolds, the greatest painter, in Burke, the greatest statesman and orator. He had Goldsmith, who had not yet published the works which have made him immortal, but whose genius with the intuition of kindred genius Johnson saw and encouraged. He had Langton, "much renowned for Greek," and Beauclerk much renowned for sprightly anecdote and satirical wit. Langton, when under twenty had got introduced to him out of admiration for his "Rambler," and afterwards brought Beauclerk, who was a fellow-undergraduate at Oxford. He loved the society of these lively and well-informed men, whose youthful elasticity helped to dissipate his gloom. No one could venture to take such liberties with him as Beauclerk. The year after his pension was conferred he made the most important acquaintance of all, that of the inimitable biographer to whom he owes a large part of his fame. The clouds which hung about his fortunes, and the obscurity which enveloped his life, were dispersed together. From the hour of his prosperity he stands out in the broad glare of day, and we know him in the most private recesses of his mind, in his minutest actions, and his most familiar words. The treasures we have, make us lament the treasures we have lost—the strange scenes of Grub Street life, the years of vigorous talk, the dramatic social contests, and the countless witty repartees. But Bos-

well, who was unborn when Johnson came to London, did not make his appearance with his note-book till 1763, and what was probably the most curious chapter of his hero's history is buried in oblivion.

Johnson was fifty-four when his pension was bestowed upon him, and he lived to enjoy it for twenty-two years. One of the earliest uses he made of it was highly characteristic. He never went into the street without a store of small coin to give to the beggars. He rented a house in Gough Square before the death of his wife, which poverty subsequently compelled him to vacate. He had now rooms in the Temple, and soon exchanged them for a separate tenement in Bolt Court, where he collected a little colony of outcasts. In the garret lodged Robert Levett, whom he brought with him from the Temple. This humble practitioner of medicine began life as a waiter at a French coffee-house frequented by surgeons, who observing his interest in their conversation subscribed to get him educated to their own profession. When he was past fifty a woman of the town, whom he met in a coal-shed in Fetter Lane, persuaded him to marry her by pretending that she was heiress to a fortune. Shortly afterwards she was tried for picking pockets, and a writ was taken out against Levett for her debts. A separation ensued, and Johnson gave shelter to the poor duped husband to the end of his days. His appearance was uncouth and grotesque, his manner stiff and awkward. He rarely spoke when any one was present, and Boswell says his abilities were moderate, but Johnson described him as a man who took an interest in every thing, and was always ready at conversation. He sat with his benefactor during the whole of his protracted breakfast, made the tea for him, and shared his roll. The practice of Levett was extensive, but it was confined to the lower orders, who sometimes paid him in victuals. Boswell wondered what could be the attractions of such a companion. "He is poor and honest," replied Goldsmith, "which is recommendation enough to Johnson." Levett died after living with him for thirty years, and his generous protector, who had always treated him with marked kindness and courtesy, wrote to Langton, "How much soever I valued him, I now wish I had valued him more." The lines which he composed on the occasion are among the most pathetic in the language. They are a

faithful description of Levett's character and calling, and out of the very lowliness of his occupation, and the rusticity of his manner, Johnson gathers materials for dignified and affecting praise.

The room on the ground-floor of the house was occupied by Miss Williams, the daughter of a Welsh medical man, who, excited like hundreds of other projectors by the offer by Parliament of a reward for ascertaining the longitude at sea, had spent thirty years upon a scheme for the purpose. Johnson wrote the pamphlet for him in which his views were expounded to the public, and Mrs. Johnson contracted a friendship for his daughter. Miss Williams was afflicted with a disorder in her eyes which required an operation, and the good man took her home to Gough Square that she might be properly cared for. Instead of recovering she became totally blind, and she remained an inmate of Johnson's house till he was driven into chambers. She returned when his reviving fortune again enabled him to have a separate residence, and as Levett attended at the mid-day breakfast table, so it was her function to preside at the midnight tea. Even when Johnson lived in the Temple she always sat up for him at her lodging, where he stopped on his way from his late conversations, and indulged, as he sipped his favorite beverage, in another spell of talk. She was well versed in literature, and expressed her ideas in good language, though a hesitation in her speech took something from the charm. Johnson said of her after her death in 1783, when she had been his companion for thirty years, "that had she possessed good humor, and prompt elocution, her universal curiosity and comprehensive knowledge would have made her the delight of all who knew her." Her peevishness was excessive, and Boswell often wondered at the patience with which it was borne by her host. Her irritability increased with age, and Johnson, who endured it himself without a murmur, had to bribe the maid to stay with her by a secret stipulation of half-a-crown a week in addition to her wages. In early life she had been connected with Stephen Grey, the poor brother of the Charter-House, who has left a name in electrical science; and she says, in a note to a poem addressed to him, that while "assisting him in his experiments she was the first who ever observed the emission of the spark from the human body." The

piece in which the fact was commemorated bore evident marks of the same hand which produced "London," and Boswell intimated his conviction to Miss Williams. "Sir," said she, with warmth, "I wrote that poem before I had the honor of Dr. Johnson's acquaintance." When Boswell repeated the assertion to Johnson, he answered, "It is true that she wrote it before she was acquainted with me; but she has not told you that I wrote it all over again except two lines."

To these inmates were afterwards added a Miss Carmichael and Mrs. Desmoulins. Of the first nothing is known; the last was the widow of a writing-master and daughter of Dr. Swinfen, the godfather of Johnson. Besides her house-room she was allowed by her protector half a guinea a week, which, Boswell remarks, was more than a twelfth part of his pension. At the time when he resided much with the Thrales, he returned every Saturday to his adopted family to give them three days of good living before he went back to Streatham on Monday night. If he dined with Boswell at a tavern in town, he always sent home a ready-dressed delicacy to Miss Williams. While he was thus beneficent and considerate to all of them, they were all obnoxious to each other. "Williams," he wrote to Mrs. Thrale, "hates everybody; Levett hates Desmoulins, and does not love Williams; Desmoulins hates them both; Poll loves none of them." Levett hated Desmoulins so much that he begged Johnson to turn her out of doors. Poll was Miss Carmichael; she had been introduced into the circle in the expectation that she would enliven the rest, and was soon involved in the general fray. The negro Frank contributed to the discord. He had been in the service of Dr. Bathurst, and his present patron, when much too poor to indulge in the luxury of a footman, had received him out of love for his former master. Johnson treated him more as a friend than a domestic. He sent him to a boarding-school in his youth, and again after he had attained to man's estate. In the letters he wrote to him in his absence he addresses him as "Dear Francis," and subscribes himself "affectionately yours." Frank complained incessantly of the tyranny of Miss Williams, and Miss Williams complained of the negligence of Frank. "This is your scholar," she would exclaim, tauntingly, to Johnson, "on whose education you have spent

£300." That any thing should be spent on one pensioner was always wormwood to the rest, and a common cause of their ceaseless enmities. Their generous benefactor, who, as Hawkins says, almost divided his income among them, was often afraid to go home and face the Babel of dissension which awaited him. When their blood was up, he himself was not always spared. Now and then he seems to have watched the contest with dramatic interest, for he once writes to Mrs. Thrale, "To-day Williams and Desmoulins had a scold, and Williams was going away, but I bade her not turn tail, and she came back, and rather got the upper hand." Much as he used to lament that his life was rendered miserable from the impossibility of making his dependents happy, if any one else spoke a word against them he would palliate their conduct, and would tell Mrs. Thrale that she could not make allowances for situations she had never experienced. Or sometimes, when his friends expressed their wonder at his forbearance, he would answer, "If I did not shelter them no one else would, and they would be lost for want." There may be persons in the world who would be willing to give as largely as Johnson, but how many would be found to make their abodes the residence of quarrelsome pensioners who should fill the house with clamor from kitchen to garret, and whose sole claim should be that nobody else would put up with them for an hour? Yet this Johnson did for twenty years, and did it as a simple act of course, without ostentation or boast. Who that had read his noble writings, or heard at some dinner his unrivalled talk, would have guessed that these poor creatures would be his chosen companions, the sharers of his home, his purse, and his time?

When Johnson, in 1756, issued proposals for his edition of Shakspeare, he promised that it should be published before Christmas, 1757. In the execution of every work of length hindrances are sure to interpose, of which the mind, after repeated experience of failure, takes no account beforehand. The principal hindrance with Johnson was indolence. His time was passed in the vacillation between intention and performance. Grainger wrote to Percy that he paid the subscription money for the Shakspeare by installments because the editor never dreamt of working while he had a couple of guineas in his pocket. The grant

of his pension did not increase his disposition for labor, and his undertaking was at a standstill. Churchill, in his wretched piece of dog-grel called the "Ghost," accused him of cheating. Johnson, who was indifferent to abuse, especially to such brutal ribaldry as was displayed in the character of Pomposo, where he is described as

"Not quite a beast, not quite a man,"

did not permit, the attack to quicken his pen. His friends grew alarmed for his credit, and Sir Joshua Reynolds entangled him into laying a wager that he would complete his edition by a certain time. Pride then got the better of indolence, and the book appeared in 1765, nine years after it was ostensibly begun. Johnson wrote to Joseph Wharton that as he felt no solicitude about the work, he felt no comfort from its conclusion. His sole satisfaction was that the public had no further claim upon him. A commentary thus reluctantly and hastily finished was of necessity imperfect. No force of mind can supply the materials which can only be derived from research. He was aware that the old copies had never been properly collated, and this task he undertook to perform. He was sensible that much of what was obscure in the text arose from the words and allusions having grown obsolete with time. The great excellence, he said, of Shakspeare was that he drew his scenes from nature, and reflected the manners and language of the world which was passing before his eyes. He was, therefore, full of colloquial phrases which succeeding fashion had swept away, and of references to the traditions and superstitions of the vulgar, which must be traced before they could be understood. Johnson promised to study Shakspeare through the works of his contemporaries, and explain the ambiguities by placing himself in the midst of his author's generation. When he came to execute his design, he neither read the old books nor was particularly nice in the comparison of the old copies. Yet he did much; his text was the purest which had hitherto appeared; his strong sense rejected the conjectural license of Pope and Warburton, and his sagacity supplied some admirable emendations of his own. Though he had not gone for his explanations to the Elizabethan literature, he disentangled a variety of intricate passages by the force of his understanding. In conciseness and perspicuity of expression his notes are a model, and one by which suc-

ceeding editors have not usually profited. His famous preface has never been relished by those whose idolatry of Shakspeare overpowers their judgment, and who canonize his faults out of admiration for his beauties. Exceptions may be taken to one or two of Johnson's positions, and he has certainly not done justice to the poetical side of the author's character: but he praises him to the height of his greatness as a delineator of nature, and in language which, though sometimes redundant, is still magnificent. But the crowning excellence of the preface is the passage in which he refutes the accepted dogma that unity of time and place was essential to dramatic probability, and by pushing the principle upon which the assumption rests to its extreme consequences, shows, with invincible logic and poignant wit, that it was not only false, but ridiculous.

The malady which preyed upon the mind of Johnson, and from which he was never wholly free, attacked him at this period with redoubled violence. He notices in his journal, on Good Friday, 1764, that he knows not what has become of the last year, that a strange oblivion has fallen upon him, and that incidents and intelligence leave no impression on his mind. He repeats this account on Easter Day, 1765. "My memory grows confused, and I know not how the days pass over me. Good Lord, deliver me!" He was accustomed to seek in society diversion from his gloom. The disorder grew too strong for the remedy; and company is an aggravation when it ceases to be a cure. He secluded himself from all but his particular friends; and Dr. Adams found him sighing, groaning, talking to himself, and restlessly walking from room to room. "I would consent," he said, "to have a limb amputated to recover my spirits." Though he had intervals of comparative calm, his malady continued to gather strength, till, in 1766 he kept to his room for weeks together, and protested with agony that he was on the verge of insanity. In the previous year he had made the acquaintance of the Thrales. They now carried him to Streatham, and in the comfortable villa of the wealthy brewer, and the cheerful society of his lively wife, Johnson recovered his equanimity and health. From this hour he was made one of the family. He came and went as he pleased. A room was appropriated to him, distinguished guests were invited to meet him, and he experienced what he had never known before—

the blended charm of domestic luxury and intellectual society. He who had made his house the home of the destitute, found in compensation a retreat for himself.

His life now passed in as even a tenor as his constitutional depression would permit. He laid aside his pen, and only wrote an occasional trifle to oblige a friend, till, in 1770, he produced his first political pamphlet, "The False Alarm." This was the term he applied to the outcry which arose after Wilkes had been expelled from Parliament in 1769, for the publication of obscene, impious and seditious libels, and the House of Commons declared Mr. Luttrell to be duly elected, although he was in a minority at the poll when he contested the vacated seat for Middlesex with the ejected demagogue. Strong as were Johnson's political convictions, they would not alone have tempted him to interpose in the debate. A feeling that he ought to aid the government of the Sovereign to whom he owed his pension, undoubtedly weighed with him. His pamphlet, which fills thirty pages, was commenced at the house of Thrale one Wednesday evening at eight o'clock, and finished by twelve on Thursday night. It is among his best productions, for few have ever equalled him in gladiatorial skill. He always began by stripping a question of its imaginary importance, and reducing it to its smallest dimensions. "The freeholders of Middlesex," he said, "are deprived of a Briton's birthright—representation in Parliament. They have, indeed, received the usual writ of election, but that writ, alas! was malicious mockery, for there was one man excepted from their choice. Every lover of liberty stands doubtful of the fate of posterity because the chief county in England cannot take its representative from a jail." But in thus ridiculing the declamation of the patriots he did not evade their more sober arguments. He stated them honestly, and grappled with them manfully. In the vulgar phrase, he takes the bull by the horns, and, whether he throws him or not, never turns from the real foe to wrestle with shadows. His tone to his opponents was bold and uncompromising. Sarcastic wit, taunt, irony, contempt, all abound in this spirited pamphlet, which has more ease of style and simplicity of language than any thing he had written.

The "False Alarm" had great success, and he followed it up the next year with his still

abler dissertation on the "Falkland Islands." Spain had forced the English settlers to evacuate Port Egmont. England compelled Spain to disavow the attack, and to restore the post she had taken. In making the restoration she stipulated that it should not affect the question of her right to the islands; and the Opposition maintained that, rather than have allowed the reservation, the British Government should have gone to war. This narrow subject, when revolved in the mind of Johnson, becomes fertile in interest. He gives a history of the islands, shows the worthlessness of the possession and the insignificance of the objections to the arrangement which had been concluded, and then draws a picture of the horrors of war. He told Boswell that he thought the subtlety of disquisition upon constitutional points in the first pamphlet was worth all the fire in the second. But the impressive description of the miseries entailed by an appeal to arms entitles the last to the palm.

He twice again entered the lists. There was a general election in 1774, and he wrote one Saturday, in obedience to a request from some friends on the previous day, an essay called "The Patriot," in which he described the characteristics of the true patriot and the false. His final effort was his more ambitious "Taxation no Tyranny," to prove the right of the English Parliament to tax the Americans without their consent. This appeared in 1775, and is written with greater grandiloquence and less spirit than any of his pamphlets. He, as usual, goes straight to the mark, laughs at the doctrines of his opponents, and assumes a tone of triumph in his arguments. But the power is hardly equal to the pretension. It failed to make the American partisans as angry as he hoped. "I think," he said, "I have not been attacked enough for it. Attack is the re-action. I never think I have hit hard unless it rebounds." Next to praise there were few things which he liked better than abuse. "I hope," he once remarked, "the day will never arrive when I shall neither be the object of calumny nor ridicule, for then I shall be neglected and forgotten."

The next important incident in Johnson's history was his visit to the Western Islands of Scotland. He always held that there was little to be learned from travelling, and once when Boswell urged him to make a tour to Ireland, and asked, in answer to the aversion

he expressed to the project, "Is not the Giant's Causeway worth seeing?" he replied by the admirable distinction, "Worth seeing? Yes; but not worth going to see." His desire, nevertheless, to go to the Hebrides had long existed. He had read in his boyhood Martin's account of these islands, and the impression it made on his young imagination had remained. He was curious in life and manners, and fancied that he should find a primitive people, with characters and habits as yet uninfluenced by the modifying effects of civilization. But his own impulses would not have got the better of his love of London and ease if Boswell had not employed his persuasions and those of his friends to set him in motion. The tour was made in the autumn of 1773, and the work which resulted from it was composed in the following year. His travels had answered expectation in the pleasure they afforded, for the constant change of place and company was the best medicine for his melancholy. In conversation he once asserted that the intellectual benefit had been equally great, that he had witnessed a novel system of life, and had gained a vast accession of ideas. In his book he acknowledged that the supposition that he should witness another phase of society was not fulfilled, and he concluded he had gone too late, when intercourse had already assimilated the inhabitants to the rest of the world. Man, however, is always man, and those who have visited remote countries have never had much to tell of him that is new. Disappointed in his anticipations, there was little left for Johnson to observe. Works of art there were none, and, if there had been, he had neither taste nor eyesight for them. Scenery was almost a blank to him, and he despised it in consequence. "Never heed such nonsense," he exclaimed when Mr. Thrale called his attention to a prospect in France; "a blade of grass is always a blade of grass; if we do talk, let us talk about something: men and women are my subjects of inquiry." But a few poor lairds and rustics could not supply many topics for a book. The theme was as barren as the islands, and to look for a throng of incidents and local discoveries in Johnson's "Journey" was to demand from the subject what it could not yield. He compensated for the deficiencies by general speculations which form the real interest and value of the work, and bear the impress of his acute and vigor-

ous understanding. He observed to Boswell that everybody commended the parts which were in their own line of study. Sir William Jones praised the portion which treated of language; "all-knowing Jackson," a member of Parliament, the observations on trade; and Burke the account of the dwellers in mountainous districts. Mr. Croker inferred that Johnson had fallen into the error of imagining Ireland to be generally mountainous, or else of supposing that Burke was from a mountainous part of it. The criticism must have been penned in forgetfulness of the purport of the passage, which is a description of the effect of natural barriers upon the habits and institutions of a people, and interested the great statesman as a philosophic politician, and not because he himself had been a resident among rocks. The "Journey" contains some of Johnson's best composition, and the style is well adapted to the frequent disquisitions. For the trivial incidents of the narrative it is too formal and stately, and it is difficult to understand how a man of his literature should have been insensible to the defect, and not have felt the necessity of lowering his manner to his subject. He had a high opinion of his work, for when, in reply to his observation, "that it had not had a large sale," Boswell remarked, "That is strange," he answered, "Yes; for in that book I have told the world a great deal they did not know before." Notwithstanding his assertion to the contrary, the sale was considerable. Cadell, the publisher, told Hannah More that four thousand copies went off the first week. The Scotch, indignant at his representation of the backward state of the country, and regarding him as a malignant intruder, who had come to spy the nakedness of their land, were loud in their censures. He wondered at their sensitiveness, and made himself merry with their abuse. Mrs. Thrale relates that he was never known to bear the least ill-will to an opponent.

The journey to the Hebrides appears to have given Johnson a taste for jaunts. He accompanied the Thrales in a visit to North Wales in 1774, and to France in 1775. Neither tour produced any lasting result. A far more memorable event, and in its consequences one of the most remarkable in his career, was when a deputation from the booksellers waited on him in 1777, and requested him to furnish the lives for a new edition of

the English Poets. He was delighted with the proposal, and when he was told to name his own remuneration he mentioned two hundred guineas. Malone wonders at his moderation, and says if he had asked a thousand or fifteen hundred guineas it would have been readily granted. But his original design was limited to a concise account of each author, and the scheme expanded in the execution. "I always said," he remarked, when his task was done, "that the booksellers were a generous set of men. The fact is not that they have paid me too little, but that I have written too much." They ultimately gave him twice the sum for which they had agreed. Boswell thought it derogatory that he should provide a preface to any author they might be pleased to select, and inquired whether he would do it to the poems of a dunce. "Yes, sir," he replied, "and say he was a dunce." A portion of the work was published in 1779, and the remainder was completed in March, 1781. Altogether it employed him for nearly four years. "I wrote it," he says, "in my usual way, dilatorily and hastily, unwilling to work, and working with vigor and haste." The moral purpose to be served by his "Lives" was always present to his mind, and he hoped they "had been penned in such a manner as might tend to the promotion of piety." Their success was immense. He announced to one of his friends that nothing he ever published had been more generally commended, and that the world was never more willing to caress him. A few persons were angry that a friend or a favorite had not been rated sufficiently high. Such objections he had expected, and told Boswell he would rather be attacked than unnoticed. "The worst thing," he went on, "you can do to an author is to be silent as to his works. An assault upon a town is a bad thing, but starving it is still worse." Even this was an abatement of his ordinary tone. He usually held, as we have seen, that the assault was an advantage. "Fame," he was wont to remark, "is a shuttlecock, which must be struck at both ends or it falls to the ground." The works which are killed by criticism are those which would speedily die a natural death. He heard the clamor which was raised against his "Lives" with perfect indifference. "I considered myself," he said, "as intrusted with a certain portion of truth. I have given my opinion sincerely; let them show where they think me wrong."

The "Lives of the Poets" were written in a happy hour, when Johnson was at the zenith of his powers, and just before his health began to give way. His understanding had gone on maturing, and his composition improving, to advanced years, when if the faculties of most persons do not decline, they are at least at a standstill. There is no other work in the language equally great that has been produced between the age of sixty-eight and seventy-two. Without having formed the project, he had been gathering materials for it all his days. He loved in conversation to descant upon the poets, to draw with nice discrimination the characters of men, and to enunciate maxims of conduct. By long experience and reflection he had stored his mind with a vast body of critical opinions and observations upon life. The project of the booksellers caught him exactly when the tide had risen to its highest and before it commenced to ebb, and enabled him to embody the accumulations of wisdom and literature which would otherwise have died with him. He had no turn for minute research, was negligent of dates, and was not eager to learn more of the history of his authors than he already knew. If he had been more laborious he would have added something to the completeness but nothing to the sterling value and interest of his work.* These consist in the skill of his narrative and in his views of books and men. It is not the novelty of the facts which makes in general a great biography; its greatness depends upon the style which adorns and the comments which illuminate it. Johnson is never guilty of the fraud which is practised by petty writers of attempting to hide his ignorance by an assumption of knowledge. When he criticises a poem from faint recollection or from casual glances he is scrupulous in confessing it. Nobody could allege of him that his works were more learned than their author.

The style of Johnson in the "Lives of the Poets," retains his dignity and classical polish with hardly a trace of his cumbrous march. His periods, which from his mode of punctuation look long to the eye, are frequently a compound of short and pithy sentences, as

* In the elaborate edition of the *Lives of the Poets*, by Mr. Cunningham, which appeared in 1854, the dates are supplied, the mistakes corrected, and numerous facts added which had been overlooked by Johnson, or which since his time have been made known to the world.

animated as they are energetic. His metaphors, in which he was always happy, are apt and concise, and illustrate while they embellish. His wit is abundant, and of a kind peculiar to himself—a species of concentrated sarcasm, by which he exposes faults, whether of men or their writings. His censure derives much of its point and sparkle from its directness, from the uncompromising fearlessness with which he holds up errors and false pretences to ridicule and scorn. Without demanding heroic excellence from fallible beings, he is not upon the whole a tender judge. His prevailing love of truth would only permit him to see men as they were. He could not be an apologist of what he knew to be blamable, nor draw an ideal portrait of an author for the purpose of exalting him to the level of his works. No one had a more piercing insight into character than Johnson. He was not to be imposed upon by the smoothness of the husk; he went straight to the kernel, and is never more excellent than when he is stripping off the cloak from hypocrisy. This deep penetration and the sagacious reflections which everywhere abound make the human interest of his "Lives" equal, if not superior to their literary criticism. In the latter particular indeed, to hear the language which is sometimes used, it might be supposed that they were an ignominious failure—a collection of blind prejudices and false decrees, which only exhibit his defective taste and dictatorial insolence. The sole ground of this absurd idea is that he did not admire sufficiently the minor poems of Milton, the "Castle of Indolence" of Thomson, and the Odes of Collins and Gray. There have always been two schools of poetry—one which addresses itself to the imagination, the other to the reason. Few persons are possessed of the catholic taste which relishes both. Johnson belonged to the school of reason, and had little appreciation of rural images and the flights of fancy. Those who have attacked him for his insensibility did not perceive that their own was greater: that if they applauded what he condemned, they likewise condemned what he applauded, and that he did not depreciate a few of their favorite pieces so much below their real level as they themselves underrated the works of Dryden and Pope. No injustice committed by him approaches the injustice with which he has been treated.

The parts of his book which are open to exception are only a fraction of the whole; the bulk of it consists of criticism which for acuteness of discrimination, warmth of praise, justness of censure, and force of expression is still unrivalled. No one has discoursed of "Paradise Lost" with such splendor of eulogy and a nicer sense of its grandeur and defects. No one has approached him in the combination of truth and power with which he has written upon Dryden, Addison, and Pope. No one has ever produced a more masterly analysis than that in which he takes to pieces the conceits of Cowley, and shows their talent on the one hand and their radical faults upon the other. There is not a single book in the whole range of English literature which contains so many original and irrefragable canons of criticism,* or which could be of equal assistance to students in forming their taste and directing them in the enlightened perusal of the best models from the end of the seventeenth century to the middle of the eighteenth.

The thoughts of Johnson towards the close of his existence reverted to its opening scenes. In a letter addressed to his old schoolfellow

* Upon this point there cannot be a more unexceptionable authority than that of Sir Egerton Brydges, a scholar endowed by nature with a fine taste, which had been much cultivated by reading, and who was so far from leaning to Johnson that he belonged to the opposite faction, and by his own confession "was too angry with him for his treatment of Collins and Gray to be able for many years to give him credit for the parts of his work which were so admirable." Yet it is thus that he writes of the obnoxious critic when time had enabled him to read his works with impartial eyes: "He was a very great man; a profound and eloquent moralist; a sagacious, discriminative, and elegant biographer; and an original, solid, and penetrating critic; though, sometimes, in light cases, a little capricious and humorous. In that part of his 'Lives of the Poets' which has no concern with his contemporaries, his taste is generally as sure as his observations are ingenious and deep, his disquisitions powerful, his distinctions acute and new, and his knowledge of life surprisingly piercing and just. His masterly development of principles; the order, clearness, and force of his mind; the readiness and aptitude of his applications; the strength of his argumentative powers; and the severe integrity of his judgments, have made the matter of those lives such a standard of wisdom, such a thick woven web of golden ore, that nothing can break it, compete with it, or diminish its value. His thoughts are all his own; every thing has passed through the sieve of his own mind. Nothing in all the criticism of the world was ever written more profound, more just, more vigorous, or more eloquent than that which he has given on 'Paradise Lost.' Nothing so new, so acute, so exquisitely happy, as that on metaphysical poetry."

Hector he said, "In age we feel again that love of our native place and our early friends, which in the bustle or amusements of middle life was overborne and suspended." He had always retained a particular partiality for Lichfield. While he was there on a visit, in 1770, a parish rate-book was discovered a hundred years old. "Do you not think," he wrote to Mrs. Thrale, "that we study it hard? What is nearest touches us most. The passions rise higher at domestic than at imperial tragedies." He maintained that his fellow-townsmen were the most sober and decent, the genteelst in proportion to their wealth, and spoke the purest language of any in England. Boswell doubted the superior purity of their language, for their pronunciation was strongly provincial; and as for their sobriety, Johnson himself remembered the time when all the better class of persons "got drunk every night, and were not the worse thought of." He asserted on another occasion, that there were no other people so orthodox in their religion, nor, we presume, so constitutional in their politics; for Boswell expressed his astonishment at discovering a Staffordshire *whig*, a being he had not believed to exist. "Sir," answered Johnson, "there are rascals in all countries." His belief in the singular virtues of the good citizens of Lichfield was only to be surpassed by the enthusiasm of the late Mr. Hargrave for the inhabitants of Liverpool when he was appointed Recorder of the borough. "The magistrates," exclaimed that eminent lawyer in the profusion of his gratitude, are "humane and active, the attorneys respectable, the juries intelligent, the suitors fair minded." "But what," he was asked, "of the prisoners?" "Why, really," replied the Recorder, "for men in their situation they were as worthy a set of people as ever I met with." After his pension permitted him liberty of action, Johnson showed the sincerity of his praises by repeated excursions to his native city. He was there in the year in which he completed his "Lives of the Poets," and was met returning from a search for a rail he had been accustomed to jump over when a lad. He related with exultation his good fortune in finding it, and the rapture with which he gazed on an object which brought back to his remembrance his juvenile sports. He ended by taking off hat, wig, and coat, and leaping over it twice. Cowper, describing in

his "Tirocinium" the attachment which men feel for the "play-place of their early days," says that in viewing it we almost seem to realize

"Our innocent, sweet, simple years again."

His manhood had been embittered by a cruel mental disease, and he therefore looked back with unusual fondness to the only period of his existence in which he had enjoyed composure of mind. So it was with Johnson. He could not endure to remember his birthday, because "it filled him with thoughts of a life only diversified by misery, spent part in the sluggishness of penury, and part under the violence of pain, in gloomy discontent, or importunate distress." There was no spot in the retrospect upon which his eye could repose except the early time before his dark distemper had extinguished "the sunshine of the breast." A presentiment that his business with the world was drawing to a close was probably the cause which, in the midst of his greatest literary triumph, turned his attention from present scenes, and fixed it with more than ordinary force upon the happy prime when he was an obscure and light-hearted Lichfield boy. He was already ill when he paid his visit in 1781, and with slight intermissions he continued to decline till disease had terminated in death.

His domestic companions preceded him to the grave. Thrale, "to whom he bent his thoughts as to a refuge from misfortunes," and whose "eye for fifteen years had never been turned upon him but with respect or tenderness," was the first to go. He died in April, 1781, and was followed by Levett in January, 1782. Mrs. Williams, who had been to Johnson "for thirty years in the place of a sister," expired in October, 1783, and was already too ill to be social. The black dog, he said, was the companion which shared his desolate meals. He used to enforce from his own experience the precept with which Burton concludes his "Anatomy of Melancholy,"—"Be not solitary; be not idle,"—and he was now suffering from the double evil. The death of his familiars had doomed him to solitude, the languor of disease had condemned him to idleness. Of visitors there was indeed no lack, but they could not fill the place of the well-tried confidants into whose hearts he had been accustomed to pour his own. The easy constant resource of inmates who had become to him as a second

self could not be supplied, and he dwelt in pathetic language upon the cheerlessness and gloom which had fallen upon his habitation at the very moment when he was confined to it by sickness, and his wonted diversions were more needful than ever. His first disorder was a severe affection of the chest, which was succeeded in 1783 by a stroke of palsy. In the afternoon of the 16th of June he felt unusually easy, and began to plan schemes of life. The same night he awoke with a confused sensation in his head. He was alarmed, and prayed to God that however his body might be afflicted, his faculties might be spared. In this conjuncture he displayed that energy and presence of mind which were characteristic of him whenever an event occurred to call them forth. To try whether his brain was affected, he turned his prayer into Latin verse. Finding his understanding perfect, but his speech gone, he drank some wine, and put himself into violent motion in the hope of stimulating the paralyzed organs into action. As all appliances proved vain, he went back to bed, and fell asleep. In the morning he wrote a note to his neighbor and landlord, Mr. Allen, and though his hand, he knew not how or why, made wrong letters, he succeeded in penning a few lines to state that, since God had deprived him of speech, and might soon deprive him of his senses, he requested his friend to come and act for him as exigencies might require. The attack passed away, but the firmness and decision of Johnson in the crisis are not less worthy of note.

The respite was short. A dropsy began to develop itself, and it soon grew apparent that death was the only physician that could cure. With that spirit which animated him from boyhood he exclaimed, "I will be conquered; I will not capitulate:" but suffering is suffering, however bravely it may be borne; and with so many ills increasing upon him from within and from without, he would naturally have been desirous to go to his rest had it not been for a horrible apprehension of death which pervaded the whole of his days—the dread, not of physical fear, to which he was a total stranger, but the dread of a humble and enlightened Christian, who knew how far what he was fell short of what he ought to be. His diaries, in which he reviews his life, are full of bitter self-reproaches. He accuses himself of neglect of religion, of waste of time, of utter uselessness to mankind. He

said that the best men, always wishing to be better, and imputing every deficiency to criminal negligence, could never dare to suppose the condition of forgiveness fulfilled. In his own estimation he was not among the best nor even among the good, and he expressed with agitation the awe he felt at the prospect of having to meet his God. As the inevitable hour drew nearer it seemed increasingly terrible to him. But his heroic sense of duty rose superior to his fears. He vehemently urged every one who approached him to take warning by his agony, and not defer their repentance. To those who were unsettled in their faith he addressed long arguments upon the evidences of Christianity, which he made them write down. He impressed upon them the doctrine that there was no hope of salvation except through the mediation of Christ, extorted from them promises to read the Bible and to keep holy the Sabbath-day. All heard him with emotion, most with tears. Many who understood less perfectly than himself the requirements of Christianity wondered that a man who had been pious from his youth should speak of himself with such extreme condemnation, and should be filled with alarms. The repentance which was impetuous at the outset with the agitation of fear was fervid at the close with the animation of hope. He inquired of the physician whether he could recover, and was answered "Not without a miracle." "Then," said Johnson, "I will take no more opiates, for I have prayed that I may render up my soul to God unclouded." Apprehension of death was succeeded by a desire to depart, and humbly believing that he had been pardoned through the merits of the Redeemer, he calmly awaited an end which he now announced to be rapidly approaching. On the 13th of December, 1784, at about seven o'clock in the evening, he pronounced the words "Jam moriturus." He then fell into a doze, and shortly afterwards, without a struggle or a groan, his great spirit fled to Him who is the source of all intellect and all life. Sir Egerton Brydges well remembered the impression made by his death upon the public, and says that nothing like the sensation it created occurred again until the death of Byron. His remains were deposited in Westminster Abbey, and of him may be repeated with literal truth the lines which Tickell wrote on the burial of Addison:—

"Ne'er to these chambers, where the mighty
rest,
Since their foundation, came a nobler guest."

Among those who bore his pall was the only person in his generation who could compete with him in intellect—the wisest of politicians, the most upright of patriots, the most eloquent of orators—the illustrious Edmund Burke. Two such stars were enough of themselves to fill the firmament with glory, and it is delightful to reflect that they were warm admirers of each other, and old and intimate friends.

The appearance of Johnson is more familiar to us through the portraits of Reynolds and the descriptions of his biographers than that of any other person of past generations. He was made on a massive scale, and after early manhood grew unwieldy from corpulence. His face was scarred with the marks of scrofula, but his complexion was clear, and his features not ill-formed. His general aspect was strange and uncouth, for in addition to his form being bulky and ungraceful, his head shook with a nervous tremor, his body twitched with convulsive contractions, and his legs and arms were tossed about by involuntary movements. These peculiarities became exaggerated when his mind was at work. It was said by one of his friends that when he read his head swung seconds. Both in conversing and in meditation he would sway backwards and forwards till his hands almost swept the ground. A lady once edged her foot towards his chair, and in his beatings of the air he clutched and pulled off her shoe. He sat down to read Grotius on a log of wood in Twickenham meadows, and seesawed so violently over his book that some people at a distance came to see what was the matter with him. Either unconscious of his peculiarities, or thinking them excusable because they were undesigned, he condemned in others the contractions which he practised himself. He called out to a gentleman in company "Don't attitudinize;" he seized the hands of a second gentleman who was enforcing his argument by action, and held them down; and he made it an especial subject of praise in old Mr. Langton, the father of his friend, that "he had no grimace, no gesticulation." To add to the singularity of Johnson's conduct he constantly talked to himself. At the approach of Lent he would retire behind a window-curtain, and pray in so loud a whisper that every

word was distinctly heard. In his ordinary mutterings fragments of pious ejaculations were frequently detected by those around him. Sometimes he murmured poetry or turned a sentence. Whatever, in short, strongly occupied his mind found a vent in this manner. In walking he rolled his entire frame from side to side, and appeared to work himself forward in a zig-zag direction by the motion of his body independent of his feet. His labored gait looked, says Boswell, like the struggling efforts of a man in fetters. He constantly executed a variety of curious manœuvres. He always passed in or out of a door or passage by a certain number of steps from some particular point, and invariably made his exit and his entrance with the same foot foremost. If he failed to do this correctly, he went back to the starting-place, and began over again. Before he crossed a threshold he commonly turned round upon his heel, and often stopped in the street to whirl in these magic circles. He expresses his scorn in the "Rambler," for the superstitions of old women, and says he has never been charged with such weakness by either friend or foe; but his twistings and measured marchings can hardly be imputed to any other cause, and it is probable that his imagination was a slave to some vague impression which his reason should have repelled.

His dress before he got his pension is said by Miss Reynolds to have been literally that of a beggar. As he was ascending the stairs, when he called on Miss Cotterel, the servant, supposing from the meanness of his appearance that he was some low person, exclaimed "Where are you going?" and seizing him by the shoulder attempted to drag him back. Boswell, who did not know him till he was easy in his circumstances, found him sitting in a shrivelled wig too small for his head, a brown suit of old clothes, and a pair of old shoes which he wore like slippers. His shirt was unbuttoned at the neck, his breeches at the knees, and his black worsted stockings hung loose upon his legs. His wig was always uncombed, and the fore part burnt away by contact with the candle. At Streatham the butler kept in charge a smarter wig which was exchanged for the shabby one as Johnson passed through the hall to dinner. His dusty suit was rarely brushed, or his under garments changed, with his own good will. In relating that one of the charges brought against Smart to prove

him a lunatic was "that he did not love clean linen," he added, "and I have no passion for it." He recollected the time when it was customary to wear the same shirt for a week, and he leaned more to the old fashion than to the new. Under the guardianship of Mrs. Thrale he paid increased attention to his dress, but in his own mind he was always indifferent to it. Yet as men are not a little disgusted in their neighbors with what they tolerate in themselves, he was fastidious in his requirements when the case was not his own. "I have often thought," he said, "that if I kept a scraglio the ladies should all wear linen gowns. I would have no silk—you cannot tell when it is clean. Linen detects its own dirtiness."

His chambers and furniture were in keeping with the master. Dr. Burney went with him into his garret into Gough Square, and found five or six Greek folios, a deal writing-desk, and a chair and a half. The chair with three legs and one arm Johnson took to himself, and gave the other to his guest. His manner never betrayed that he was conscious of these external deficiencies, and he apologized to no one either for the negligence of his attire or the want of common conveniences in his rooms. He often quoted with approbation the saying of the old philosopher, that he who wants least is most like the gods who want nothing. His slovenliness was at first the consequence of his poverty, and had become confirmed by custom. On particular points he was more nice than might have been expected from his general habits. A waiter in Scotland, when told that the lemonade was not sweet enough, took up a lump of sugar with his fingers and put it into the glass. Johnson indignantly flung the lemonade out of the window, and Sir William Scott was afraid he would have knocked down the waiter.

With these notions of delicacy his mode of eating was repulsive. His huge body required a vast deal of nutriment for its sustenance, and he devoured his food in a manner which resembled the voracity of a beast of prey rather than the usual moderation of a human being. The veins of his forehead swelled, a perspiration stood upon his face, his eyes were riveted to his plate, and his ears were closed to all which was passing. He would go contentedly for forty-eight hours without tasting a morsel, and declare that he did not suffer the least inconvenience; but whatever he did

at all he did violently, and more like a giant than an ordinary mortal. He told Mrs. Thrale that his thoughts were less of dishes than his talk. His general bias, nevertheless, was to the side of good living. "Some people," he said, "have a foolish way of not minding what they eat; for my part, I mind my belly very carefully, for I look upon it that he who does not mind his belly will hardly mind any thing." In the same spirit he would remark, after his return from a party, "It was a good dinner enough to be sure, but not a dinner to ask a man to." He sometimes accuses himself in his diary of too much addiction to the grosser pleasures of the table, and an observation he made to Boswell will explain the cause of the epicurism against which he struggled, but in which he certainly indulged: "Madmen are all sensual in the lower stages of the distemper; they are eager for gratifications to soothe their minds and divert their attention from the misery which they suffer." There is hardly a trait that has been blamed in Johnson's character that cannot be traced to his mental affliction. He abstained from wine during many years of his life, for it aggravated his malady, and he could not take it in moderation. But he never cared for the flavor; it was only the result he desired. He thought claret poor stuff because a person would be drowned before it made him drunk, and he placed brandy at the head of all liquors, "because it would do soonest for a man what drinking *can* do for him." In the days when he took his bottle he preferred to be alone, that nobody might witness its effects. The largest quantities, however, of the strongest liquors rarely did more than slightly exhilarate him.

No one could be a greater stickler for politeness than Johnson; he called it "fictitious benevolence," and added that the want of it never failed to produce something disagreeable. He believed that he had cultivated successfully what he so strongly commended. "I look upon myself," he said, "as a very polite man." He had indeed a delicate perception of the principles of good manners, but he had not the art of executing the outward forms, and his temper often interfered with the essence. He told Mrs. Thrale he had not attempted to please till he was after thirty, from thinking it hopeless. When he was bent upon being courteous he overacted his part. His compliments, says Miss Hawk-

ins, were studied, and in uttering them his head dipped lower, the semicircle in which it revolved was of greater extent, and his roar became deeper in its tone. Mr. Seward, who saw him presented to the Archbishop of York, spoke of his bow as such a studied elaboration of homage, such an extension of limb, such a flexion of body as had seldom been witnessed. He valued himself upon his ceremonious conduct to ladies, and, in the disordered dress described by Boswell, he insisted upon attending them, when they called upon him in Bolt Court, to their carriage in Fleet Street, where a mob would gather to gaze at the strange apparition. In a fit of gallantry he took the hand of Mrs. Cholmondeley at dinner, and held it so long to his eye while he admired its delicacy that she whispered to her neighbor, "Will he give it to me again when he has done with it?"

As his politeness was too labored and artificial, so his deviations from it were equally in an extreme. He could not brook a slight or suffer the least encroachment upon his independence, and in his poverty he assumed a defiant air to preserve his dignity. The homage of inferiors contributed to foster an overbearing style, which was further aggravated by a loud voice and stern countenance. He thought his imperiousness and dogmatism an advantage. "Obscenity and impiety," he said, "have always been repressed in my company." He was easily provoked by folly or heated by argument, and then a manner which even in his ordinary modes inclined to the harsh and dictatorial became violent beyond the usages of civilized life. He vociferated the severest things in his most stentorian tones, and only thought how to silence his antagonist. By the time he had got to the end of a period he was a good deal exhausted in his vehemence, and, in the phrase of Boswell, blew out his breath like a whale. He was so conscious of his infirmity that once beginning, after his interview with George III., to enumerate the benefits he derived from conversing with the Sovereign, he placed first among the advantages that he could not be in a passion. His principles were opposed to his practice. "Sir," he said to Mr. Fitzherbert, "a man has no more right to *say* an uncivil thing, than to *act* one; no more right to say a rude thing to another than to knock him down." He preferred a cold and monotonous to an emphatic talker, and when Burke,

in proposing Mr. Vesey as a member of the Literary Club, commenced by observing that he was a man of gentle manners, Johnson stopped him: "You need say no more; when you have said a man of gentle manners you have said enough." He was always anxious after his outbreaks to make amends. He took the earliest opportunity to drink to his antagonist, or direct his discourse to him. He sometimes apologized with tears in his eyes. His rudeness and impetuosity were after all less frequent than might be inferred from the specimens preserved by his biographers, who naturally gave prominence to his most piquant sallies. Many people who were long acquainted with him had never heard a strong expression from him. Time exerted a mellowing influence upon his temper, and he confessed that his good-humor had increased with his years. Indeed, after dwelling upon the rarity of the quality, and denying it to all the persons whom Boswell named as examples, he said, "I look upon *myself* as a good-humored fellow." He acknowledged that in his youth he had treated mankind with asperity and contempt, but that as he advanced in life he felt more kindness because more was shown to him.

Whatever might be his theoretical notions of decorum, he looked upon his breaches of it as a very venial offence. In his illness he requested Langton to tell him in what he was faulty. Langton, for reply, gave him a paper on which were written some texts commanding Christian charity. Johnson inquired in what particulars he had offended. On his friend responding "that he sometimes contradicted people harshly," he flew into a passion. "Who," he afterwards said to Boswell, "is the worse for that?" "It hurts," said Boswell, "people of weaker nerves." "I know," retorted Johnson, "no such weak-nerved people." "It is well," observed Burke, when this was repeated to him, "if when a man comes to die, he has nothing heavier upon his conscience than having been a little rough in conversation." Mrs. Thrale bore testimony that the roughness was confined to his words, and that all his actions were good and gentle. He treated lightly his verbal violence, because he judged by his own sensations, and was not aware how much pain he inflicted. When he and Goldsmith were represented in a newspaper as the pedant Holofernes and his flatterer, Goodman Dull, the sensitive poet came to him foaming

and vowing vengeance against the printer. "Why, who the plague," replied Johnson, "is hurt with all this nonsense? and how is a man the worse, I wonder, in his health, purse, and character, for being called *Holofernes*?" "I don't know," replied Goldsmith, "how you may like being called *Holofernes*, but I do not like to play Goodman Dull." This was the measure of the difference between his feelings and those of Boswell's weak-nerved people. What was anguish to Goldsmith was sport to Johnson. "Poh, poh," he once exclaimed, "who is the worse for being talked of uncharitably?" Criticism, as we have seen, never disturbed his quiet. He used to quote the proverb, that nobody throws stones at a tree that does not bear fruit, and he accepted censure as a part of the general chorus in his praise. If, to use the metaphor which Burke applied to his style, he had the nodosities of the oak, he had also its strength. Deformity though it was, his ruggedness yet partook of the gnarled grandeur of the king of the forest.

His vehemence of language has sometimes been confounded with censoriousness of disposition, from which he was wholly free. His friends considered that both intellectually and morally he was inclined to think better of his acquaintances than they deserved. He did not conceive, like some people, that charity consisted in a violation of truth, or that it was a virtue to commend a man for qualities he did not possess. One of his sayings was, that "he who praises everybody praises nobody." But no one was less disposed to imagine evil until it was proved. "He always maintained," writes Mrs. Thrale, "that the world was not half so wicked as it was represented, and he might well continue in that opinion, as he resolutely drove from him every story that could make him change it." When poor Bickerstaff fled the country, and the remark was made that he had long been a suspected man, Johnson loftily replied, "By those who look close to the ground dirt will be seen: I hope I see things from a greater distance." His worst dislikes seldom prompted him to say more than that "the fellow was a poor creature or a blockhead."

A few rude speeches sink into insignificance when compared with a charity which was only bounded by his means. "He loved the poor," writes Mrs. Thrale, "as I never yet saw any one else do." As he said of Levett, he was "of every friendless name the friend." Be-

sides his in-door pensioners he had a number of out-door dependents, and when his own funds were exhausted, he wrote innumerable letters to solicit the contributions of his acquaintances. He frequently bestowed all the silver in his pocket upon the miserable beings who waylaid him on his passage from his house to the tavern where he dined. Even in his early London days he would go up at night to the destitute children who were sleeping upon the projecting stalls of shops or on the sills of doors, and slip a penny into their hands to buy them a breakfast, "and this," adds Mr. Croker, "when he himself was living on pennies." Sixpence, he once remarked, was then a great sum to him. When it was objected that it was useless to bestow half-pence upon beggars, because they only laid it out upon gin or tobacco, he energetically exclaimed, "And why should they be denied such sweeteners of existence? Life is a pill which none of us can bear to swallow without gilding. Yet for the poor we delight in stripping it still barer, and are not ashamed to show even visible displeasure if ever the bitter taste is taken from their mouths." He one night found a woman of abandoned character lying exhausted in the street, and lifting her up, he conveyed her on his back to his own house, had her nursed till she recovered her health, and then obtained her a situation. A heartless man would have passed her by, a humane man might have given her money; but was there any second person in the whole of the vast population of London that would have taken up the forlorn, diseased, and dirty sufferer in his arms and carried her to his home? There are charities which from their very lowliness become sublime. He avowedly kept only £100 of his income for his personal wants, and Mrs. Thrale calculated that he did not, in fact, spend more than £70 or £80 at most. His kindness to dumb creatures was as conspicuous in its way as his benevolence to men. He used to go out himself to buy oysters for his cat, lest if he put the servants to the trouble they should take a dislike to the animal, and use it ill.

His acute sense of the real miseries of life made him intolerant of fanciful complaints. He upbraided Mrs. Thrale for wishing one summer, after a lengthened drought, for rain to lay the dust. "I cannot bear," he said sharply, "when I know how many families will perish next winter from the scarcity of

that bread which the present dryness will occasion, to hear ladies sighing for showers only that their complexions may not suffer from the heat or their clothes from the dust." He had no sympathy for the pangs of mortified vanity any more than for the lamentations of softness and luxury. Nor while prompt to relieve distress, did he ever affect an exaggerated sorrow, and he blamed such false pretences in others. "You will find," he said, "these very feeling people are not very ready to do you good; they *pay* you by *feeling*." It would not have been surprising if a man who had experienced so much physical wretchedness had lost some of his sensitiveness to the griefs of the heart. Yet few could possess a more affectionate nature or be more deeply touched by the loss of friends and the pathos of sentiment. "Want of tenderness," he always maintained, "was want of parts, and was no less a proof of stupidity than depravity." He was thrown into an agony at the sight of an omelet shortly after the death of Dr. Nugent, because it was the dish they had had for supper the last time they met. He cried when he read the letter which described the death of Mr. Elphinston's mother. Tears were a tribute he often paid. Miss Reynolds related to him some mournful story of maternal affection, and she was interrupted by his sobs. He wept as he told that Dr. Hodges, the physician who remained in London during the plague when most of his brother practitioners fled, died soon afterwards a prisoner for debt. He burst into tears in repeating the Latin hymn "*Dies iræ*," and again when he recited the description of the English from Goldsmith's "*Traveller*." He read Beattie's "*Hermit*" with similar emotion. There is a pathos in these pieces which cannot be fully apprehended except by minds refined by literary culture. Their power proceeds from an art which is lost upon untutored perceptions, and their effect upon Johnson is at once a proof of the acuteness of his feeling for poetry and the strength of his human sensibilities.*

Of a man so tender and beneficent it might well be asserted that he had nothing of the

* The noble traits of his character are brought out with great force and vividness by Mr. Foister in his "*Life of Goldsmith*." No one, it seems to us, has shown such a fine perception of the grand qualities of Johnson, or has described them with such genial sympathy.

bear except the hide. Bishop Horne compared him to the pineapple, which was the most delicious of all fruit notwithstanding that it had a prickly skin. The kindliness of his nature was enhanced by its robustness. The bold front which he presented when battling with poverty and neglect was shown in all the other circumstances of life. He defied alike discomfort and danger—rarely complained himself, or allowed any one else to complain in his presence. If he got wet to the skin he would not change his clothes when he reached home, but would allow them to dry upon his body. He would stand in the coldest days and nights before an open window; and when Boswell shivered, as they came up the Thames from Greenwich one bitter evening in a boat, Johnson scolded him for his effeminacy, and roared out, "Why do you shiver, sir?" Sir William Scott complained of a headache when travelling with him in a chaise. "At your age, sir," replied Johnson contemptuously, "I had no headaches."

He was accustomed to maintain that the man who was afraid of any thing was a scoundrel. "He feared death," says Boswell, "but he feared nothing else—not even what might occasion death." Though his convulsive movements would not enable him to guide a horse, and though he was so short-sighted as hardly to be able to see a yard before him, he would follow the hounds in a chase of fifty miles with desperate daring, while the sportsmen shouted to him not to ride over the dogs. He despised the occupation, and his sole motive for engaging in it was his determination to show himself as good a man as his neighbors. He laughed at the notion of caring for horses running away with a carriage. The event occurred when he was travelling in France with the Thrales, at a spot where the road was bounded by a precipice. They narrowly escaped with their lives; but he continued to ridicule the apprehensions of his companions, and exultingly exclaimed that nothing came of it "except that Thrale leaped from the vehicle into a chalk-pit, and then walked out looking as white." Having heard it asserted that if a gun was loaded with two or three balls, there was a risk of its bursting, he put in six or seven, and fired them off against a wall. The same spirit of defiance led him, when he was bathing near Oxford, to swim straight into a pool because

he was cautioned against it by Langton as particularly dangerous. He protested that he was afraid of no dog in the world; and as two fierce pointers were fighting at the house of his friend Beauclerk, he cuffed their heads with his fists till they ran howling away. He cared as little for men as for dogs. Having left for a few minutes a chair which was placed for him between the side-scenes of the theatre at Lichfield, a gentleman took the seat, and refused to resign it, upon which Johnson lifted up chair and gentleman together, and flung them both into the pit. Foote had resolved to personate him on the stage, and expected to derive large profits from the performance. Johnson purchased a stout oaken cudgel, and declared that he would break the bones of the satirist in the presence of the audience. The threat was enough for Foote, who only ventured to ridicule the unresisting. Johnson, it must be confessed, was no ordinary antagonist. A gang of four persons once attacked him at night in the street, and he kept all four at bay till the arrival of the watch. He united skill to muscular power, for he had learned to box from his Uncle Andrew, who was a professional prize-fighter. If *not* to be afraid of any thing is *not* to be a scoundrel, Johnson was certainly a very honest fellow.

The melancholy which saddened the whole of his days had an influence upon his habits. Miss Williams, on coming from a party where several persons had got intoxicated, exclaimed, "I wonder what pleasure men can take in making beasts of themselves?" "He, Madam," replied Johnson, "who makes a *beast* of himself gets rid of the pain of being a *man*." This was more than a casual retort, for he deliberately maintained to Boswell that no one was happy in the present moment except when he was drunk. He held that whatever felicity was enjoyed must be borrowed from hope. When he first entered Ranelagh it gave him a gay sensation of mind such as he had never experienced before, but it speedily went to his heart to reflect that there was not a single being in all the brilliant circle around him who was not afraid to go home and think. These notions of the universal misery of mankind were derived from the generalization of his personal feelings. However mirthful he might seem in company, he declared it was "all outside." On his return from a splendid assemblage at

Mrs. Montague's, where he appeared more pleased than usual, in consequence of the marked respect which was paid him, Dr. Maxwell asked him if he had not been gratified? "Not *gratified*!" he replied; "yet I do not recollect to have passed many evenings with *fewer objections*." The impossibility he found of "razing out the written troubles of the brain," made him catch at any thing which would enable him for the moment to forget them. "The great business," he said, "of his life was to escape from himself;" hence his passion for conversation and the late hours he kept. "He was afraid to go home and think." "There is one time at night," he wrote in the "Idler," in an essay which he avowed to be his own portrait, "when he must return to his house that his friends may sleep; and another time in the morning when all the world agrees to shut out interruption." These are the moments of which poor Sober trembles at the anticipation. That he might avoid both these periods of solitude, he was neither willing to go to bed, nor willing to get up again. He did not rise till twelve or one, by which hour his friends began to arrive. He sat a long while declaiming over his breakfast, went out about four to dine at a tavern, and seldom returned before two in the morning. He boasted on one occasion to Miss Williams that he was home for once before everybody was in bed, for that he had knocked against some bricklayers in the court. "You forget, my dear sir," she replied, "that they are just up, and are now beginning their morning's work." To escape from moody meditation and the anguish of his own corroding thoughts, he often amused himself with practical chemistry. "He has a small furnace," he says of Sober, "which he employs in distillation, and which has long been the solace of his life. With this he draws oils and waters which he knows to be of no use." They were of use, because the employment was medicine to his malady. For the same reason he loved to be driven fast in a post-chaise. "A man," he remarked, when accounting for the fascination of hunting, "feels his vacuity less in action than in rest." He consequently delighted in the mere motion of travelling, and exclaimed to Boswell as the carriage rolled rapidly along the road, "Life has not many things better than this." The animation of the movement diverted his mind from preying on

itself, and he found positive pleasure in a respite from pain.

As conversation was his main refuge from uneasy thoughts, no amount of it could make him weary. He would keep it up with unflagging spirit as long as any one would sit with him—his ideas never failing, his knowledge never exhausted, his wit never running dry. He maintained that a companion who talked for fame could not be agreeable, and that the real pleasure was in a quiet interchange of sentiments without rivalry or effort. Yet Burke asserted that he argued only "for victory," and that when he had neither a paradox to defend nor an antagonist to crush, he would even preface his assent with "Why, no, sir." He would commence a sentence with, "Why, sir, as to the good or evil of card-playing!" "Now," said Garrick, "he is thinking which side he shall take." He disliked hyperboles, and whoever praised any thing extravagantly, or asserted any thing confidently, was sure to be contradicted by him. His friend Dr. Taylor expatiated on the merits of a bulldog, which he boasted was perfectly well-shaped. Johnson would not suffer even a point like this to pass. He examined the animal attentively, and having prepared himself for the contest, called out, "No, sir, he is *not* well-shaped, for there is not the quick transition from the thickness of the fore-part to the slim part behind which a bull-dog ought to have." In all the countless discussions he provoked he was rarely worsted, for if argument failed him, he won the victory by his wit. He once dreamt that he was engaged in a conflict of repartee, and was much depressed because his antagonist got the better of him. This he adduced to show that the judgment is weakened by sleep, or he would have known that the rejoinder which vexed him was as much his own as the observation it eclipsed; but the incident is equally an example of the mortification he always felt at defeat, though the annoyance and the ebullition of temper it produced were only momentary. Wit, in the estimation of his friends, was his most shining quality. "Rabelais and all the rest," said Garrick, "are nothing compared to him. You may be diverted by them, but Johnson gives you a forcible hug, and shakes laughter out of you whether you will or not." No man that we know of ever had a quiver so full of arrows. His repartee seldom lay upon the surface; it was as original and unexpected as it was sharp

and telling. He had a vast abundance, in addition, of that species of illustration which equally serves to cover sophistry and to set off truth, and an acuteness of discrimination which enabled him instantly to detect the fallacies of an opponent. He envied Beauclerk the ease with which he uttered his sallies, and the freedom from the look which announced that a good thing was coming, and from the look which betrayed a consciousness that it had come. But though his own elaborate manner did not please him so well, all his biographers testify that his deliberate enunciation and emphasis of tone added greatly to the force of his sayings. His delivery was as much more imposing than that of his antagonist, as his matter was more powerful; and nothing could resist the combined brilliancy of the flash, and the roar of the thunder.

Johnson, like Milton, thought,

"That which before us lies in daily life
Is the prime wisdom."

Of this "prime wisdom" there is a greater store in Boswell's work than any other book we can remember.* What Johnson might not unlikely have spread out in his "Rambler" into a flat dissertation he condensed in his talk into a lively and idiomatic aphorism. Sketches of character, rules of conduct, literary criticism, and questions of morals and religion, were his favorite topics. The conversation which had no bearing upon man of the passing generation he considered lost to both pleasure and instruction. He expressed a hope that he might never hear of the Punic war while he lived, and when Mr. Vesey began to talk to him about Catiline's conspiracy "I withdrew," he said, "my attention, and thought of Tom Thumb." There was one quality for which he was noted, whatever the subject on which he spoke—the minutest regard to truth. His own scrupulosity had made him particularly sensible of the general laxity. "Nothing but experience," he said, "could enable any one to conceive that so many groundless reports should be propagated as every man of eminence might hear of himself." He imputed the deviations from accuracy rather to carelessness than to falsehood, and he might have added, to the disposition

* Mr. Croker's notes, which combine the gleanings from the numerous other memorials of Johnson, are often quite as valuable as the text. If his edition were published in parts it might find its way to a class who are, as yet, ignorant of the most entertaining and instructive book in the language.

to supply the want of knowledge by conjecture, and from a little that is known to infer a great deal that is not. He had thus grown to be extremely incredulous, and if the narration partook at all of the marvellous he would break in with a significant look and decisive tone, and exclaim, "It is not so; do not tell this again." Hogarth once remarked of him, that, not contented with believing the Bible, he believed nothing but the Bible, and said, like the Psalmist, "in his haste, that all men were liars." He was especially mistrustful of the tales of travellers. When a friend repeated to him some extraordinary facts related by the companions of Captain Cook, Johnson replied, "I never knew before how much I was respected by these gentlemen; they told me none of these things." He dined in company with Bruce, and Boswell found, on questioning him the same evening, that he gave no credence to the traveller's testimony. In this he was not peculiar. Horace Walpole was present when Bruce was asked what description of musical instruments were used in Abyssinia? "I think," he answered, "I saw one *lyre* there." "Yes," said Selwyn, in a whisper, "and there is one less since he left the country." The rudeness of which Johnson was sometimes guilty to the narrators of wonders solely arose from the excess of his incredulity. He firmly believed that he was rebuking falsehood, and serving the cause of good morals.

In the same way he would violate the common forms of society to mark his horror of sceptics. The Abbé Raynal was introduced to him and offered his hand. Johnson drew back and refused to take it: "I will not," he said to a friend who expostulated with him, "shake hands with an infidel." He would more easily pardon bad practice than bad principles. He had a strong feeling against schismatics, and never grew more hot than when the discussion turned upon the points at issue between them and the Church. As he walked at Oxford in New Inn Hall Garden, Sir Robert Chambers picked up snails and threw them over the wall into the adjoining premises. Johnson roughly rebuked him for so unneighborly an act. "My neighbor," pleaded Sir Robert, "is a dissenter." "If so," rejoined Johnson, "toss away, toss away as hard as you can." This was more than half a jest, for it was a common habit with him to indulge in humorous exaggeration, but

a slight incident recorded by him in one of the pious entries in his diary is a serious and significant indication of his sentiments. "Seeing a poor girl at the sacrament in a bedgown I gave her privately a crown *though* I saw Hart's Hymns in her hand." Hart was a Presbyterian, and notwithstanding that the girl was attending the Communion in the Church of England, it was plain from Johnson's "*though*" that he thought the mere fact of her reading Presbyterian hymns, which she probably valued for their piety, without the least knowledge of the ecclesiastical principles of their author, was a reason against the extension of his bounty to her. All distinctions were forgotten by him at the spectacle of distress, and that her possession of this book should have passed through his mind as a motive for checking his benevolence is a curious evidence of the strength of his convictions. His distaste, however, for their opinions did not prevent his partiality for individuals. He had friends among men of all parties, both political and religious.

He was as stout and energetic in his creed respecting the State as in matters which affected the Church. He was a Tory opposed to constitutional changes, and the license of the mob. But those who have represented him as a bigot to abuses have not read his works. In many respects he was in advance of his age, or at least must be ranked among the foremost men in it. Years before Wilberforce had opened his lips against the slave-trade or slavery, Johnson in a company of "potent, grave, and reverend signiors" at Oxford gave for a toast "To the next insurrection of the negroes in the West Indies." Boswell, who shared the common opinions of the time, boldly avers that "he showed more zeal than knowledge" on the subject, and that to adopt his notions would "be robbery of the planters," "cruelty to the African savages," and in a word would be

"To shut the gates of mercy on mankind." As early, again, as 1751 Johnson published a paper in the "*Rambler*," in which he urged with unanswerable arguments a mitigation of our bloody criminal code, and showed that humanity and policy alike demanded the change. A little later, in the "*Idler*," he demonstrated the cruelty of allowing creditors blinded by interest and inflamed by resentment to imprison at their private pleasure debtors guiltless of fraud, and whose only crime was mis-

fortune. His own poverty and the arrests to which he had been subjected, together with the inhumanity he must have seen practised towards his obscure associates, had put him in a position to know and feel the injustice of the system. But in no shape did oppression find a friend in him, and he was not more zealous for order and authority than he was hostile to the ills which laws had caused and laws could cure.

The history of Johnson teaches a lesson of resignation to those who are straitened in their circumstances when a man so good and gifted languished for considerably more than half his life in abject penury; a lesson of perseverance to those who are desponding, when a toilsome and desolate road, which it took more than thirty years to traverse and which seemed to have no other goal than the grave, led him at last to competence and ease; a lesson of contentment to those who do not possess his mental pre-eminence, when Providence had coupled with it a disorder which saddened his days, and conjoined with the brightness of the flame the smart of the burn; a lesson of *intellectual* humility to those who are his inferiors in mind and knowledge, when he always spoke of his own attainments as slight, and a lesson of *moral* humility to those who are not possessed of his worth, when, in spite of his exemplary conduct and marvellous benevolence, he was almost enraged if any-

body spoke of him as good; a lesson of the supreme importance of religion to those whose piety is less fervent than his when his repentance was so bitter at the close, and present fame and future renown were quite forgotten in the contemplation of eternity; a lesson to all of what can be effected in situations which appear to afford no scope for the exertion of abilities or the practice of virtues, when we see the learning he amassed in his youth with scanty aid from books or instructors, the works he wrote without ease or encouragement, the charities he exercised without gold or silver when he was living himself upon fourpence halfpenny a day, and the honesty and independence he maintained when not to lower his opinions or sully his conscience was to condemn himself to fare as coarse as that which was allotted for the punishment of crime. Whether we desire an example to stimulate us to the acquisition of knowledge under difficulties or the retention of uprightness under temptation, there is no more memorable instance of either than is presented by the life and character of this illustrious man. And whatever be the condition of him who seeks to profit by the story, none can be so low but he is in a position as advantageous as Johnson, and none can be so high but that with all his helps he will have enough to do to emulate his model.

WHAT CONSTITUTES THEFT?—A very curious case still more strongly illustrates this point. A lady was coming out of the Opera-house, when a thief snatched at her diamond ear-ring, and tore it completely from her ear, causing it to bleed. Upon her return home, she found the ring lying in the tresses of her hair. The man was tried for stealing this ring, and being found guilty by the jury, the opinion of the judges was taken whether this could be considered a sufficient taking: the opinion of the judges was afterwards delivered, in which they held, that as the ring had been entirely removed from the lady's ear, and was wholly in the possession of the prisoner, although but for an instant of time, when he lost it in her hair, the taking was complete. So, where a thief led a horse from one part of a field to another, intending to steal it, but was apprehended before he could get the horse out of the field, it was decided the taking was complete. In all these cases you will have noticed the principle upon which they were decided is that the property must be completely severed from the possession of the owner, and entirely within the possession of the taker, no

matter, in each case, for how short a period of time. Two or three cases showing what is not a sufficient taking, and we will then proceed to consider another branch of the subject. One Wilkinson put his hand into the pocket of another, seized his purse, and actually succeeded in taking it out of his pocket. However, the purse being tied by a piece of string to a bunch of keys which still remained in the person's pocket, the thief was unable to complete his object, and was arrested and tried for stealing the purse; but it was held that as the purse was still attached to the pocket of the owner by the string and keys, it was still in his possession, and the prisoner was entitled to be acquitted. So, where a thief went into a shop, took up some goods intending to steal them, but before he had removed them far from the spot on which they lay, discovered they were tied to the counter by a cord; upon being tried for stealing, it was held that the property never was either completely severed from the possession of the owner, nor completely in the possession of the prisoner, and he was acquitted.—*Sleigh's Handy Book on Criminal Law.*

From The Eclectic Review.
BAD WEATHER ON THE MOUNTAINS:

AN INCIDENT OF ALPINE ADVENTURE.

By Alfred Wills, Esq., Author of "*Wanderings among the High Alps*."

MOST of us have, at some time or other in our lives, experienced the miseries which exposure to wind and weather are capable of inflicting. To ride half the night in drenching rain, or in a steady drizzle on an "outside car," in the wilds of Connemara, or over a pass amongst the English lakes, to buffet with the storm across the desolate Highland moor, to struggle in blinding snow through a strange and thinly inhabited country, are among the occasional necessities of most travellers—never free from abundant discomfort, not always from actual danger. Storm and wind have a specific effect of their own in lowering the vital powers and destroying the elements of resistance to their attacks. The case of the two gentlemen who perished on the well-marked path between King's House and Fort William, positively killed by bad weather on an August day,* though a striking, is far from being a solitary, instance of the death-dealing power which the elements can exert. But it is difficult, from the widest experience of bad weather at ordinary elevations, to form any conception of the terrible aspect it assumes on lofty mountains; where the fury of the blast is increased tenfold,—where rain gives place to snow,—where, perhaps, the very mist is frozen,—where the soil and rock are replaced by substances incapable of absorbing and of radiating heat, so that the instant the sun's rays are withdrawn, every source of warmth is extinguished,—and where the scanty produce of caloric in the body is more than exhausted in raising the thin and frosty air you breathe to a temperature which the lungs can endure.

It has been my lot, among the many chances of an inveterate climber, to learn what bad weather means in a spot as lofty, and as remote from external assistance, as any in which I am likely, in Europe, at all events, again to incur the anger of the elements, namely, on the summit of Mont Blanc; and it was an experience such as the most reckless traveller would hardly soon forget, or willingly brave a second time. The circumstances of the expedition were peculiar. During the summer

* In 1847. See Quarterly Review, Vol. CL. p. 209

of 1857, Dr. Tyndall, one of our most acute and persevering scientific investigators, was engaged during some weeks in a series of researches on the Mer de Glace. A well-known guide of Chamouni, Auguste Balmat,—of whom it is sufficient, on the present occasion, to say that had he had the advantages of a liberal education, he would probably have been one of the first scientific men of the day,—mentioned to Dr. Tyndall that he thought of placing some self-registering thermometers on and near the summit of Mont Blanc, for the purpose of ascertaining the minimum of external temperature attained in that elevated region, and the depth to which such cold penetrates beneath the surface of the ice. Circumstances prevented Balmat from carrying out this experiment during the autumn of 1857; and, before the next campaign, Dr. Tyndall, believing that the result would be a valuable addition to our knowledge of the real phenomena and condition of the ice-world, procured from the Royal Society a small grant for the purpose of assisting so praiseworthy an undertaking. Proper thermometers were taken out from England; and, about the beginning of September, Dr. Tyndall repaired to Chamouni and proposed to Balmat to make the ascent and plant the thermometers. Balmat was at the time engaged as my guide, and I gladly accepted Dr. Tyndall's welcome invitation to be of the party. The weather, however, broke up, and, for some days, it seemed hopeless to think of any long or difficult expedition; and, despairing of Mont Blanc, we made a compromise by burying one thermometer in the ice and planting another beneath some rocks, above the summit of the Jardin. The depth of snow we encountered here appeared to afford satisfactory proof that it would be in vain to attempt Mont Blanc. The day, however, was one of singular magnificence, and the following day proving equally fine, we could none of us resist a longing desire to be once more amongst the grandest scenes of the ice-world, and to gain that glorious summit which rose so temptingly before our eyes. Balmat had another thermometer which, though not particularly suitable, would yet answer the purpose sufficiently well in default of a better. The expedition was therefore determined upon—Balmat to be at its head, as the projector of the experiment—Dr. Tyndall the scientific director, and prepared to make some interest-

ing observations on other matters—I to “make myself generally useful” as far as I could. We were met, however, by a not altogether unexpected difficulty. The chief guide, a man of rare stupidity and ignorance, declared that without the regulation number of guides, which means the regulation expense of about £25 apiece, we should not go. We had each of us ample knowledge of Alpine climbing, had each of us ascended Mont Blanc before,* and were resolved that nothing should induce us to submit to this enormous imposition. We appealed to the superior authorities, to the Syndic, and through him to the Intendant of the province, a gentleman of great accomplishments and singular administrative capacity, and readily obtained from him an official countenance for our proceedings, the result of which was that the chief guide’s threats of prosecutions and *procès-verbaux* were unheeded; and, instead of our having any difficulty in procuring the porters we required, we might have had a hundred if we had wanted them. Precious time, however—two or three days of glorious weather—had been lost in these negotiations, and when we started it was not altogether without a misgiving for the morrow.

The matchless grandeur of the scenery of Mont Blanc is neither generally known nor adequately appreciated; and, despite the great wasting of the glaciers, which was observable in most parts of the Alps last year, the wonders of the ice-world of Mont Blanc were certainly greater than in 1857. The difficulty of reaching the Grands Mulets was considerable, owing to the enormous magnitude of the crevasses beneath their base. One prodigious chasm stretched right across the glacier de Tacconnay, from the foot of the Grands Mulets to the summit of the Montagne de la Côte, and it was only after repeated trials and great delay that we found a practicable, though far from an easy, passage. A wonderful but unpromising sunset closed the day, the sun sinking to rest amidst a chaos of gorgeous clouds, some piled and banked one upon another till they looked as solid as the rock on which we lay, others whirled in wild eddies by the rising west wind, or torn to

* In 1857, Dr. Tyndall had performed the rare, and not very cautious, feat of ascending with one guide only; and had, a few weeks before the time of the present expedition, climbed alone to the summit of Monte Rosa; in my judgment, however, a much less arduous undertaking than his ascent of Mont Blanc.

ragas and scattered piece-meal in space by some furious and transient blast, others floating calmly in loftier regions, looking down in quiet unconcern on the seething masses below, all lighted up in a thousand different tints by the glowing rays of the descending luminary; some crimson, some gold, some dark violet, some purple, some of the richest mixture of yellow and brown, some but faintly blushing, some scarcely differing in hue from the pale, cold blue of the zenith sky, some even tinged with green. I thought of Heber’s beautiful lines:—

“I praised the sun whose chariot rolled
On wheels of amber and of gold;”

when lo! the central mass, behind which the sun was now nearly hidden, suddenly grew semitransparent, presenting an immeasurable depth of amber mist, itself apparently one vast reservoir of illuminating power. Quick as thought, disclosing still vaster deeps of space behind, a kind of tunnel opened through its very heart, out of which shot across the clear space in front a bright cone of ruddy light, which turned its own amber channel to a cylinder of melting gold, and lit up the dark forms of the mountains in the west with a strange, unearthly glow. These gorgeous dioramas of celestial scenery seldom indicate settled weather; and it was not without misgivings that I watched a sunset scene, which has been without a parallel in my recollection. The evening had not well closed in before a light fall of snow took place, followed by a storm of wind so furious that it seemed at times resolved to annihilate the little cabin which formed our shelter. The upper part of Mont Blanc was covered, through a great part of the night, with a dark misty cap, which experience taught us was but the whirlwind of dry snow that was eddying about the summit.

However, about one o’clock, things looked better—the stars began to shine, and by half-past one we had started on our icy pilgrimage. The comet, which Dr. Tyndall and I had discovered the night before at the same instant—I, certainly, without having heard of it before—was now blazing over the Col de Balme, and a considerable portion of the heaven was clear. The sky looked more and more promising as the night wore on; and when, half an hour before sunrise, we were on the Grand Plateau, and the air was cold

and crisp and dry, we congratulated each on the fair prospect of glorious weather at the top. A very great difficulty successfully overcome on the ascent of the Corridor raised our enthusiasm still higher; and it was only when we reached the summit of the Corridor, and exchanged the still and dry atmosphere of the northern side for a cold, misty, driving wind, charged with the moisture of a million clouds that lay in dense immovable masses over the whole sea of mountains to the south, through which but three solitary peaks—Monte Rosa, the Grand Combin, and the Matterhorn—were able to pierce, that we gave up our exalted hopes, and felt that we should be fortunate if we reached the summit without accident.

There was no time to be lost: we were already somewhat wearied with the deep snow, and a most fatiguing ascent still lay before us; so we stayed only to effect a more equitable division among our party of our one bottle of champagne than was practicable so long as the cork remained undrawn, and addressed ourselves seriously to the Mur de la Côte. We had not gone many hundred yards before a light drift of transparent mist, scarce enough to dim the rays of the sun, came dancing by us. It was but the precursor of many others; and, from the time we reached the top of the Mur, we never saw the summit till we stood upon it. Still it was so clear upon the Chamouni side, the mist so often grew lighter and thinner, and the wind was so strong, that we could not help hoping it might partially, at any rate clear off. When we were about half way up the Calotte we caught our last glimpse of Chamouni, and our friends below had their last peep at us. We saw no sight or sign of the living world again till some four hours afterwards, when we emerged once more into sunshine and daylight on the Grand Plateau.

And now, as we fought our way up the steep Calotte, with beating hearts and panting lungs, the boiling mist eddied round us in denser and denser folds, the struggling beams of the watery sun grew fainter and fainter, the drifts of powdery snow, gathered by the south wind from the surface of the glacier, were swept more swiftly past us, though we purposely kept as much to the north and as far from the actual ridge as possible for the sake of all the little shelter we could get.

Suddenly, about half-past nine o'clock, we found the steep incline at an end, and were welcomed by a sharp and eager blast as we stood once again on the summit of Mont Blanc. A site for the thermometer was soon selected, and, with the ice-hatchets and a long iron bar we had brought to mark the spot, our three stout young porters set vigorously to work to dig a hole three or four feet deep—a cell in which the instrument should be immured till the genial suns of July or August shall enable us to release the captive and extort the secrets of the icy prison-house. A mackintosh was thrown down on the snow, and a shelter against the wind constructed by stretching a plaid over some alpenstocks, where, two feet from the summit, Dr. Tyndall might boil some water and ascertain its temperature. A momentary lift in the fog was taken advantage of by Balmat and myself to creep some distance along the narrow ridge which forms the summit, to investigate the possibility of an ascent from the Grand Plateau by the Bosse de Dromédaire, a favorite project with Alpine explorers which remains yet to be achieved. While we did so the thick mist swooped down again upon us, and we seemed indeed alone, for we could neither see nor hear our companions.

Digging holes in the ice is not nearly so easy a task as it might be thought, and Balmat joined the efforts of his vigorous arm and determined will to those of our porters, who were all young men—from twenty to three-and-twenty years of age—and most of whom were making their first ascent. After watching Dr. Tyndall's fruitless efforts to get his lamp to light, in which most of our matches were already consumed, some of the drifting snow having got into the wick, I flung myself on a corner of his mackintosh and endeavored to reconcile myself to the misery of our situation. The thermometer, sheltered from the wind, stood at 12.3° Centigrade, or twenty-two degrees of Fahrenheit below the freezing-point. What it was in the wind I had not the energy to determine, but it must have been considerably lower. Our party presented an odd aspect. Every man had tied his hankerchief over his hat to keep his ears from freezing: and Balmat and myself had linen masks covering the whole of the face below the eyes except the mouth and nostrils. Dr. Tyndall was more efficiently protected by

a most useful beard and moustache. We were all blue in the face, and every hair was converted into a fine thread of ice.

It is commonly supposed that the summit of Mont Blanc presents a face of tremendous precipices towards the south. The extensive prevalence of this notion amongst even well-informed men, is a striking proof of what I have elsewhere ventured to assert, that, despite the number of ascents, and the multitude of accounts of them that have been given to the world, the exact character of the scenery and the topography of the mountain have been but imperfectly made known. Instead of the ridge of Mont Blanc ending abruptly in the precipices which overhang the Allée Blanche, it is separated from them by a broad stretch of undulating glacier, not less than a quarter of a mile wide. This was not an unimportant item in the forces arrayed against us; for, from the whole area of this snow-field, the dry and frozen snow on the surface was hurled in clouds against the summit, adding greatly to our difficulties and discomforts. At last, when we had endured for nearly a whole hour the combined attack of wind and mist and snow-drift, I began to get uneasy as to consequences. My hands and feet were almost without feeling, and one of Dr. Tyndall's feet was quite senseless, and on getting up from the snow, where a bursting headache had made me glad to lie as still as I could, I was so alarmed at the aspect of our party that I called Dr. Tyndall's attention to it, and, abandoning all further attempts to boil water, we resolved instantly to depart. Our men looked like animated corpses; the livid hue of their faces had deepened almost into black; they were shrivelled and shrunk, and their features wore an expression of suffering and anxiety. Every hair, not only on our faces, but on the cloth or flannel of our coats, gaiters, or plaids, was an icicle. Dr. Tyndall's beard and moustache were white, scarcely a vestige of their proper color being observable. He told me my eyelashes even were all coated with ice. The wind was howling round us, as if in an unholy triumph over our wretchedness. Balmat, I thought, looked particularly ill; but, with indefatigable zeal, he was still busy trampling down the snow into the hole where the thermometer now lay nearly four feet below the surface. The iron bar was sunk seven feet deep, leaving about three feet above the ice to guide those

who may seek it next autumn, to the spot. I asked the men some questions, but every one seemed unwilling to open his mouth, and answered only with a gesture. "Let us be off at once," I exclaimed, "or we shall have some serious accident." The words were hardly out of my mouth when Balmat came up to me and said quietly, "*Je crains beaucoup que les mains me sont gélées,*" and on inquiry I then learned, for the first time, that an iron ladle, which I had provided for the purpose, had been forgotten at the Grand Mulets, and that he had actually scooped out the ice and snow from the hole with his hands! No wonder that a single pair of woollen gloves were not stout enough to resist the protracted action of such fearful cold. We gathered our traps together with all the haste we could, and in two minutes were out of sight of the summit, hurrying down the trackless waste of ice which forms the Calotte. We could not see thirty yards before us, and every trace of our ascending footsteps was completely obliterated; but, guided by the unerring sagacity of Balmat, we had no fear of losing the direction, even in that dreary mist. We had not gone many hundred yards, however, before Balmat again turned to me and said, "I feel a *something*. I think I shall look at my hands." And pulling off his gloves he found, to our horror, that, from the ends of the fingers to the knuckles, they were perfectly black. He said quietly, "There is no time to lose;" and casting down his traps, began to rub his hands violently with the snow—then, as no trace of sensation appeared, he began to get alarmed, and begged us to beat his hands. "*Frappez,*" he said, "*frappez fortement; n'ayez pas peur; fortement, fortement!*" So Dr. Tyndall took one hand and I the other, and taking off our thick, heavy, fingerless gloves, used them to beat the black and senseless hands with all our might. In that thin atmosphere any exertion is severely felt, and at length I actually fell back upon the snow exhausted with the work, and was obliged to call upon one of our porters, all of whom seemed quite stupefied at the catastrophe, to relieve me. Then we rubbed him with brandy and gave him some rich cordial—a sort of liquor that Dr. Tyndall had in his flask. All the while we were standing in the driving mist and pitiless wind, not a quarter of a mile from the summit of Mont Blanc. At last, after about half an hour's incessant and violent labor, sensation began to return.

I have witnessed some forms of acute suffering in my time, but such an exhibition of human agony I have never beheld, and I devoutly trust I never may again. He was at times quite unable to speak, and kept rubbing his hands in the snow and stamping about in a kind of frantic way, his quivering lips, bent brow, and dilated nostrils alone visible beneath the mask, and telling us what he was suffering. Then he would exclaim passionately, "Hélas, je souffre, je souffre." Then he would turn to us, and, with that generous devotion to others which marks a noble character, implore us not to expose ourselves on his account, and give us some directions as to the route. The painful excitement of the scene may be more easily imagined than described, and it was increased by our utter inability to do any thing to help him. Every now and then he bit one or other of his fingers, and finding that, notwithstanding the torture which the rest caused him, these were still senseless, set to work again with redoubled energy to rub and beat the hand.

No less than three quarters of an hour were spent in this dreadful way, when he said it was not safe for us to stay longer and we must move on. The porters took up the things he had dropped, and I carried his alpenstock, so that both hands were free to continue the rubbing, which he did with great energy. The descent of the Mur de la Côte was anxious work; for the mist was thick and the wind furious; and some of the loose snow, which had helped us greatly in the ascent, had been swept off, leaving us the hard and glassy ice beneath, on which to make our slippery way. However, it was safely accomplished; and a short distance down the Corridor we got out of the worst of the wind and the snow-drift, and found our foot-prints showing faintly on the otherwise trackless surface. It was at the top of the Corridor that I felt more than anywhere else the bewildering effect of the mist and the drift. There is a wide, undulating snow-field, of very gentle inclination, and little to indicate the proper direction to be taken, and I saw how very easy it would be to go wrong. Our foot-prints once regained, we had of course no difficulty about the route. One tremendous chasm had to be passed on the middle of the Corridor, approached by a descent of thirty or forty feet down a bank of ice, whose inclination could not be less than

60°.* It was touching to observe that Balmat was not one whit less thoughtful for the safety and comfort of every one else than when he was in the height of health and personal enjoyment. One of the porters, a young man of the name of Bellin, who, if he lives, will be one of the most daring guides of Chamouni, could hardly keep the tears out of his eyes as he spoke to me of "Monsieur Balmat," whom he said he loved as much as his own father. Nor was it less touching to observe the eager anxiety of all these young men to spare him every sort of trouble or fatigue. From the Grands Mulets a great deal of baggage had to be carried, and our porters were over-weighted, but not one ounce would they let Balmat carry, and not one word of complaint or remark did we hear, at any time during the day, at the really severe labor imposed upon them. One remarkably handsome and intelligent young man, Favret, the son of the Syndic, not only carried an immense load, but afterwards encumbered himself with a heavy ladder we had left at the widest crevasse of the glacier de Tacconney, and carried it a great distance to facilitate the descent of his comrades.

While we were descending the lower part of the Corridor it began to snow, and we made up our minds for bad weather. A very few minutes later, however, on reaching the level of the Grand Plateau, we experienced one of those marvellous, though not uncommon, vicissitudes of weather so characteristic of a mountain climate and passed suddenly from an arctic to an almost tropical temperature. Mist and storm had passed away, as if by magic, and though the thick vapors were still circling round the higher parts of the mountain, a bright sun was shining upon us out of a blue and cloudless sky, and the broiling rays poured down upon our heads were shot back from the dazzling snow with such fierceness that the heat was almost unendurable. We learned afterwards that, from below, the Grand Plateau and the lower half of the Corridor had been visible most of the day; and persons unfamiliar with the climate of the higher Alps

* I am perfectly aware how much steeper than is generally imagined a slope of 60° is; but the inclination of the Mur de la Côte is nearly 45° and this was far steeper than the Mur. I remember that in places, without leaning back, I planted my hand in the snow behind me to keep myself from slipping, and that the feet of the person who followed me seemed just above my head.

had supposed it impossible that the light vapor they had seen hovering over the summit could cause us any serious inconvenience. Goldsmith's well-known simile is as destitute of physical truth as it is full of poetical beauty:—

"As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm;
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

We had not done with bad weather: when we left the Grands Mulets, a little before three o'clock, it was in a thick fall of snow, and it is not easy to imagine a more desolate and cheerless prospect than that of the cold, dead, white glacier and the naked rocks, backed by the falling snow, which effectually concealed all the distant portions of the prospect.

Poor Balmat's hands continued very painful all the way home, and sensation was but very imperfectly re-established in several fingers. The third finger of each hand was the worst. The back of each hand was swollen to a height of nearly an inch above the natural level, from the severe beating which had been administered. It was many weeks before they were entirely cured, and eventually several of the nails came off. He did not feel it prudent to accompany me over the Glacier du Tour, for which I started the next day, nor over the Col d'Erin, which I crossed three days later; but exactly a week after our Mont Blanc expedition I had the gratification of standing by his side on the next highest peak in Europe, the wonderful summit of Monte Rosa—nor did he suffer from the expedition.

Balmat was an old and honored friend of mine long before this adventure but, could any thing have increased my regard for him, it would have been the manly fortitude with which he bore suffering about as severe as the human frame can undergo, and the generous and affectionate care with which, in the midst of it all, he was constantly ministering to the wants or comforts of the rest of the party, and displaying the most thoughtful and scrupulous attention to every precaution by which accident might be prevented or dan-

ger averted. He told us that the pain he suffered was without a parallel in his experience, and that it was the pricking sensation every one has felt when his hands or feet have been extremely cold magnified a hundredfold, and extending back through the arms and body till it seemed to centre in the heart. Nor was it for many hours that he could feel any kind of assurance that he would not lose some at least of his fingers. His first apprehension was, of course, that he might lose both hands. He had long had, however, a great notion of the interest, in a scientific point of view, of the experiment for which the expedition was undertaken; and his first thought had been that he could bear the calamity the better, as it had been met with in the cause of science. With a rare and unostentatious disinterestedness he at once made light of the suffering, the moment he felt that danger was at an end, and resolutely declined to receive the slightest remuneration for his services. He had originally thought of making the experiment himself, he said, and should have carried it out at his own cost; and, grateful as he was for the recognition by the Royal Society of its value, and to Dr. Tyndall for bringing it under their notice, he could not think of accepting any thing for himself. The lecture-hall at Leeds rung with well-deserved applause when, at the late meeting of the British Association, Dr. Tyndall recounted to the first savans of Europe, to most of whom Auguste Balmat is personally known, the danger he had undergone and the courage and disinterestedness he had displayed.

I have only to add the expression of a hope that, should the summit of Mont Blanc be reached this year by others before Dr. Tyndall, Balmat, or myself be able to undertake the ascent, the iron bar and the thermometer may be respected, and that should they be spared by the elements, man also may consent to leave them unmolested for those who placed them there to disinter.*

* I placed a thermometer, a week later, within three or four feet of the top of Monte Rosa, for which I am anxious to bespeak the same forbearance; and for its protection I would beg any early ascenders of Monte Rosa not to roll down bits of rock on the N.E. (or Görnergat) side of the summit.

From The Economist, 12 Feb.

THE EMPEROR'S ITALIAN POLICY, AND ITS RECEPTION BY EUROPE.

THE uneasiness at Paris which the Emperor's speech, even as interpreted by Count de Morny's emphatically pacific address to the Corps Legislatif on the following day, has as yet failed completely to remove, arises, no doubt, from the remarkable contrast between the tone of the official pamphlet of Friday and the public avowals of Monday and Tuesday. The former, it is thought, expresses the Emperor's own wishes, or what we may call his *exoteric* doctrine on the Italian question; while the Emperor himself and Count de Morny express only his *esoteric* doctrine, that is, just so much of his real wishes as they feel it safe at the present moment to propound to Europe. And, no doubt, this is in a great measure true. But what do we argue from it? Thus much, at least, that the Emperor is forced to acknowledge that he must for the present keep the greater part of his Italian policy in its present purely theoretic form,—that after carefully sounding his position, he has found it absolutely necessary to disavow emphatically all intention of any aggressive movement, and to represent his misunderstandings with Austria as in no way beyond the scope of diplomatic negotiation. Now this is a very great encouragement for the Peace party in Europe. For it gives us every hope that if the French people maintain the resolutely pacific attitude that was so remarkably indicated by the thunders of applause which greeted M. de Morny's pacific declarations,—if England does not recede from the admirable position taken by the statesmen of all parties on the first night of our Session—to which in great measure the Emperor's suddenly moderated tone is no doubt to be ascribed,—if Russia look with as little favor on the menacing policy of France as, in spite of general rumor to the contrary, we happen to know that she is now disposed to extend to it,—if Prussia and the German States continue, as they certainly will, steady in their disapprobation,—and, above all, if Austria be disposed to listen to reason as to the evil results of her influence on the politics of the States of the Church, and to take such steps in pressing a more liberal system on the Pope as will render it possible for both the French and Austrian troops to evacuate the Roman dominions at no distant date without danger of insurrection,—then the Emperor, unsupported by his own subjects, and cordially aided by Piedmont alone, will not have the audacity, as he has not obviously as yet the audacity, to hazard war. In the mean time we must expect his demeanor to involve as little of retraction as is consistent with pacific professions, on more than one ac-

count. Not only does every ruler shrink from a sudden and frank abandonment of a favorite policy,—but, in the present instance, such a course would endanger the diplomatic success of the French Government on those points of difference with Austria in which the Emperor believes it essential to persist and to succeed. Though we may hope, therefore, that he is at present really disposed to abandon the wider issues of his Italian policy as sketched out in the official pamphlet, it is not perhaps unnatural that he should still hold them over Austria *in terrorem*,—in order that she may see clearly the possible results in case her absolute refusal to listen to the Emperor's more moderate proposals should excite an anti-Austrian feeling in France and Europe that would enable him to throw away the scabbard, and abandon diplomacy altogether.

It is most essential, therefore, to understand clearly what the Emperor's own doctrine on Italian politics is, and how much of it he is at present compelled by the grave disapprobation both of France and of Europe to retain as mere individual opinion in an entirely suppressed state. The careful study of the official pamphlet, *Napoleon III. and Italy*, will teach us clearly enough the main outlines of that policy for Italy which would be his own, if he could find any opportunity of carrying it out; and we shall briefly sketch it for our readers, pointing out those features in it which have principally aroused European censure and disgust.

The Italian policy of the Emperor has one and only one strong position—a position the strength of which all Europe readily admits. It would not be a piece of meddling, it is indeed one of the first duties of his Government, to withdraw his troops from the occupation of Rome; and, in doing so, to guard against all risk that Austria will march in as France marches out. The French troops, originally ordered to Rome by Cavaignac, have now for years formed the sole guarantee of such civil order, if it deserves the name, as now exists, and of those civil abuses which are an integral part of it, at Rome. France has thereby won for herself the hatred of the Italian nation, and has in great measure deserved it. It is incumbent on the Emperor's Government to remove that reproach, and, in doing so, to guard against the danger of merely leaving a political vacuum for Austrian power to occupy. This is the starting point of the Emperor's Italian policy, and the official pamphlet strengthens the case by proving that the Emperor's efforts to provide for the settlement of this question date at least from the peace of Paris. The public are furnished with the heads of a moderate and rational-looking scheme proposed by France to Austria in July, 1857, for the purpose of inducing

the Pope to effect such reforms in the system of his secular administration as might remove the danger attendant on the evacuation of his dominions by both Powers. We are assured that this scheme was so much mutilated by Austria as the condition of her concurrence, as to deprive it of all efficient guarantees for good government, and that in this form it was rejected by France as worthless, and that so the *status quo* continued.

We may well doubt if the Emperor were ever very eager that this proposal should have been accepted. His plans for Italy harmonized better with Austria's refusal than with her co-operation. This the Italian pamphlet brings out clearly in the obviously triumphant tone with which it asserts that Austria, in refusing this overture, "obeyed a political sentiment which we cannot blame, but cannot acknowledge." In short, the author implies that the native misrule of the Papal and Neapolitan States in Italy is as really essential to the confirmation of Austria's power in Lombardy, as was the native misrule of the King of Oude and the Nizam to the confirmation of the British power in India. In proof of this the writer cites a secret article from the treaty of 1815 between Austria and Naples, "that His Majesty the King of the Two Sicilies shall not admit changes which cannot be reconciled either with monarchical institutions, or with the principles adopted by His Imperial and Royal Majesty for the internal government of his Italian provinces." It is argued that the virtual refusal of Austria to admit any of the more liberal proposals of France in reference to the Papal States in 1857, is a proof that the same doctrine is still held at Vienna which obtained there when this secret article in the treaty with Naples was signed in 1815. Nor does the Emperor wish to think Austria wrong. The pamphlet boldly says that "to ask Austria to exercise a milder and more liberal rule in Lombardy, would be simply to ask her to commit suicide. . . . Every atom of liberty conceded by her to that conquered country would be made use of as a weapon towards enfranchisement." Yet, adds the pamphlet, "place the Roman States, Naples and Tuscany under a better system of government, and the first effect would necessarily be to create a bond between those States and Lombardy, the pressure of which would be immediately felt by Austria." Hence, infers the Emperor, "I could not, though I would, have settled the urgent question of the foreign occupation of the Papal States by simple negotiation with Austria. I tried to do so, and I failed—nay, I ought to have failed. For Austria was closely bound up with a bad Italian system, and it is of no use to attempt

to remove one bad element in a bad system. You must go to the root of the thing, or leave it alone altogether."

Such is Louis Napoleon's excuse for widening the narrow ground of difference with Austria, on which all Europe would have agreed with him, into a policy which is more consonant with French ambition and Napoleonic traditions. He tries to persuade Europe that the politics of the Italian peninsula must be reconstituted completely or not touched at all; that they cannot longer be left alone without explosive results; that no power without "an army of two hundred thousand disciplined men, five hundred field-pieces, and two hundred siege guns," could drive and keep Austria out of Italy; and, therefore, that France is the only power that could properly undertake it. He then proposes that France and Piedmont should purge the Italian States, one and all, of Austrian influence, establish not revolutionary but constitutional governments, under French tutelage, and finally bring about a federation of these States—so purged—amongst each other, which should be strong enough to resist any fresh Austrian invasion. For all this France is apparently to claim only the reward of a good conscience!

Now the obviously revolting element in this Napoleonic policy is the affectation on the part of the French Emperor of acting a beneficent Providence of Italy. England and most of Europe would heartily approve a determined effort on the part of France to redeem the false step taken by the Republic in sending troops to Rome; and to prevent any attempt of Austria's to take advantage of that step. But there is nothing which justly disgusts us more than the attempt to build up a far-reaching speculative system of theoretic policy on the foundation of one obvious and clearly defined duty; and this, too, quite apart from the consideration whether the large and theoretic policy is honest or dishonest,—sincere or ambitious. We may truly say that even had Sardinia had the power and the will to initiate the scheme and policy now sketched by the Emperor, quite alone, and without French aid,—it would not have met with general approval in Europe, simply because it would be a theoretic and speculative scheme, and not one naturally flowing from obvious political duties. The sympathy felt by England with Italy in 1848 was so strong exactly because the course of events was *natural*,—embodying the real issues of popular conviction and feeling. The present crisis is artificial, long and cautiously elaborated,—a medicated political draught prepared for Italy by the intellectual "forethought" of the Emperor. As such, even if honest—even

if Sardinia were the only agent—we should reject it;—and we know that with France it cannot be honest.

Let England, then, make her national opinion clearly known and strongly felt, that so far as France has a clear duty to perform towards any Italian State,—so far she shall have English sanction and approval in performing it properly, and in taking guarantees against the risk of Austrian interference. But beyond this we will not go. We will express our hearty abhorrence of the meddling Napoleonic propensity to play Providence to European nations. We will believe that the natural course of State politics, like the natural course of society itself, is far more trustworthy, than any European politician's efforts to realize his own ambitious dreams.

From The Press, 12 Feb.

"NAPOLEON III. AND ITALY."

No document that ever emanated from Cabinet Council, Congress, or Divan has created so powerful an impression—or rather sensation—as the missive bearing the title at the head of this paper. The state of Europe had become feverish. Hints accidentally dropped had been construed into omens. The *Rentes* and the Funds had fallen; and nations at length felt their hearts failing from fear of the things they foreboded and foresaw coming on the earth. Most men longed for a single word or suggestion of authority that would tend to calm the troubled waters and restore confidence to the hearts and markets of Europe.

At length a document appeared in Paris, of which we do not hesitate to assert at once that for splendid indefiniteness it has no parallel. Where appreciable meaning crops up from beneath the flowers of rhetoric, it is indicative of ideas which if embodied and struck into deeds must go far to revolutionize Europe. It presents a brilliant résumé of facts relating to the French and Austrian armies in Central Europe; also a picture of the Pontifical régime at Rome sufficient to shake the confidence of the extremest Ultramontane in Papal infallibility. It shows well many and weighty reasons why things should not continue as they are in crushed and bleeding Italy. So far it speaks out that Rome is a scandal to Christendom, its rulers scarcely equal to Bomba, its people ready, the instant they hear the tramp of the retreating soldiers of the foreigner, to rise as one man and avenge the wrongs of years, is the strong conviction of nearly every reflecting and sensible man in Europe. These truths are developed with matchless point and felicity of expression. Every sentence is a trumpet summons to interference. A *dignus vindice nodus* is proved. But who will step forward as the

vindex? Who is to be the leading Crusader? What royal sword shall first reflect the rays of the suns of Italy? The writer of the pamphlet knows but one man equal to the crisis. Napoleon III. is the man of destiny. This is his mission. This is, to say the least, a very ominous conclusion. Where the writer feels that his reasoning is defective, he fascinates the reader by the beauty of his sentences and the radiance of the golden mist which he spreads like an atmosphere over all his words. But he does not conceal that a necessity has arisen so urgent that it alone is ample apology for any course the Emperor may feel it right, agreeable, or expedient to adopt. It is singular that France should so intensely and so suddenly love Italy. Yet sympathy with suffering far off, as if there were no room for tears near home—airy visions of Italian nationalities starting into life on every acre on which appear the eagles of France—reasons, if unsubstantial, splendidly worded, why somebody should strike a blow for Italy, if not in compassion, at least in gratitude for all that Europe has received from that land of glorious traditions and brilliant antecedents—constitute the staple of this very remarkable document. That Somebody is very easily identified by the reader.

In the commencement of the pamphlet we find much that is objectionable in policy—in the close much that we must denounce as criminal in principle. There the writer openly avows that treaties are of no permanent obligation, and that they may be broken by either of the contracting parties whose prejudice or passion can construe his own interest into an intimation from Providence. This is a startling doctrine. It offends the moral sense of mankind. The Emperor's speech does not repudiate it. It injures most him who enunciates it. It is worthy of Napoleon I. If such a doctrine be accepted, or even submitted to, honor, justice, property, and all the landmarks of civilization will be swept away. A new flood will devastate Europe, and on the desert left by its retiring waters the sword will rewrite the bound-lines of nations. Surely this cannot be the deliberate conviction or the creed of the French Emperor! Surely, surely he cannot be so insatuated as to challenge for himself another St. Helena, or to waken up on the streets of Paris the notes of that terrible Marseillaise which has more than once swept away dynasties and thrones and tyrants as by the breath of a whirlwind. Henry IV. of France justly said, "If honor were banished from every place on earth, it ought still to be found in the breasts of kings." We trust and believe that Louis Napoleon will not be the royal exception in the nineteenth century. He cannot afford to be so. If a

ruler, however powerful or popular, set up his own will against the laws of nations—if he suffer his individual passion to be the sole judge of his wrongs and the governing asserter of his rights—if he set at defiance those arrangements which a sense of justice and the experience of mankind have shown to be essential to the tranquillity of nations—he profanes the sanctuary of justice, and proclaims from the centre of Europe the doctrines of anarchy. His guilt is great as his power, and his ruin as sure as the existence of a Righteous Ruler among the nations of the earth. We would remind the Emperor of his celebrated aphorism, "The Empire is Peace." These pregnant words have again fallen from his lips. May we not infer they are not unfelt in his heart as the beat of humanity, and in his conscience as a solemn obligation? The Emperor has intrusted to him a noble mission. He has great opportunities. His are a people ready to forget the griefs of the past in the enjoyment of a prosperous present. Europe will rejoice to see him making a noble use of his exalted position. Far more delightful and desirable will he find it to task his intellect in devising plans for the amelioration of his people and for the advancement of commercial interests and manufacturing energy. He may shine with no perishable lustre in asserting the equal rights of Protestant and Roman Catholic—in diffusing a spirit of mild toleration, and in a thousand ways already open increasing the material prosperity of France. Thus, and only thus, he will glorify his reign and root his dynasty in the national heart. Thus the reign of "The Napoleon of Peace" will exceed in splendor and endurance that of "the Napoleon of War." The seeds of good may be sown in war, but it is in peace that they ripen into prosperity. The highest achievement of a ruler is the highest usefulness. The France of 1859, the Emperor well knows, is not the France of 1793. Light has penetrated the minds of vastly greater numbers of the people. An enlightened public sentiment, in spite of every discouragement, is making way and asserting its superiority and ascendancy over brute force. This cannot be annihilated. The Emperor may send his armies across the Apennines or the Pyrenees, and carry victory in his van, and leave military glory in his rear, but a voice silent though it be as yet, gathering intensity from repression, is sure to make itself heard then: it will meet him on his return, and upbraid him with the guilt of unjust and unjustifiable war; and from the lips of mothers deprived of their sons, and widows mourning over their slaughtered husbands, it will speak in piercing tones, wither his greenest laurels, and embitter his cup, and wound him with that intolerable sting,

the consciousness that he has outraged the moral sense of mankind, spurned the remonstrances of Europe, and risen in rebellion against Him to whom "belong the shields of the earth." The speech of the Emperor in the papers of Tuesday indicates he is not insensible to public opinion.

Were there the faintest hope of regenerating Italy by military interposition, one would pity more than blame. But in truth Italy would be the greatest sufferer. Its provinces, exhausted by war, would in all likelihood come under a more crushing tyranny, with less strength to endure it. Let Italy be left to itself. If it be what it is proclaimed, it has in its own bosom the elements of its regeneration. If, however, it be a broken-down and worn-out race, no external force will long perpetuate it, much less restore it. Its inner temperature needs increase. Its heart needs a new inspiration. It is the patient that is sick, not the bed that is hard. When recovered, the invalid will speedily right his outer condition. As long as he remains on the sick list, the sword of the foreigner may shorten but cannot prolong his days or reinvigorate his frame. Physicians of all sorts have been the death of Italy. The sooner she takes heart to turn them out of doors, and to cast their nostrums to the dogs, the sooner she is likely to get up. She has had endless doses of drugs from Pio Nono—enough to have sent her into purgatory long ago. She may well be spared the infliction of more at the hands of Napoleon III.

From The Press, 12 Feb.

THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL.

PAMPHLETS bid fair to take in France the place of newspapers. The shelves of foreign booksellers in London groan under publications—some suppressed, some indorsed by Authority, sent forth by every imaginable Party abroad, as Joram sent forth his horsemen to ask of Jehu "Is it peace?" The answers are before us. France and Sardinia have spoken—the first in the Pamphlet of M. de la Guerrenonniere, and in the Speech of the Emperor; the latter in the Circular of the Government to its foreign ministers, and in the Speech of Count Cavour. Austria and Rome alone remain profoundly silent, and show no sign.

What, then shall we infer, and in what sense shall we interpret the outspokening of France and Sardinia, and the reticence of Austria and Rome? What is the import of the answers to the question "Is it peace?" The World seems to think it is peace. That Napoleon yields to Public Opinion, and withholds the dogs of war that he had in the slips. He will not cry "havoc." To a certain extent we agree with the World and with the

public journals which have given expression, if not form, to its views and impressions. The flame that bid fair to set all Europe in a blaze is beaten down. The pamphlet and the Speech of the Emperor have thrown cold water upon it and damped its rising, but not, we fear, extinguished the embers from which it flashed forth. In the midst of the rhetoric of peace which has given hope to the world, we find interpretations of history and declarations with regard to present position which force us to look at the future with distrust and apprehension.

The words of the Pamphlet and of the Speech are the words of a Peacemaker, but they clothe doctrines and principles which if persisted in and acted upon, must sooner or later lead to war. We like not, we confess, the curious view which the Third Napoleon takes of the war policy of the First Napoleon. Conquest was with him, we are assured, a secondary, not a primary object. It is true that, like Genghis Khan and Alexander, he broke forth from his own boundaries, and overran the world, but he did it not from the lust of acquisition or the love of military glory, but from a passion for universal civilization, and from the conviction of a mission. Napoleon the First was the Schoolmaster of the World, and Napoleon the Third says that "France possesses in perpetuity an interest in every disturbance, every difference in every country where there is a cause to be upheld which tends to establish justice and extend civilization." We say we like not this doctrine. A schoolmaster with a mission to teach and to arbitrate, who sets out on his mission with half a million of bayonets at his back, is a very dangerous man, and we fear his attempts at instruction are not likely to be received with much cordiality or confidence.

We earnestly hope, therefore, that the Emperor will not decide to accept the conclusion that he has a mission to civilize people, or organize their Governments, and that at all events he will not make conquest the first condition of instruction. Throwing the patient, and sitting upon him with rattle of drums and braying of trumpets, has answered wonderfully well in the instance of Mr. Rarey, but we deprecate the application of the system to nations.

We admit fully, at the same time, that with reference to Italy the Emperor of the French is in a very singular and difficult position; one out of which it is both the duty and the interest of the other Powers of Europe to help him. He can scarcely be expected to withdraw his forces from Rome unless Austria as well as France retire behind the boundaries assigned to her by the settlement of 1815; and yet if both withdraw and leave the Pope

and his Hierarchy to arrange matters as best they may with the misgoverned population of the States of the Church, there is not a doubt that from one end to the other there will be a blaze that will burn every priest's frock to tinder, if not the very priest himself within it. Here lies the great, the real, the primary difficulty. Meet that, solve the problem it presents, and peace may be preserved. It may be done if France is sincere in her professions, and Austria, who as yet has made no profession, is honest in her intentions.

Without the co-operation of Austria, France, unless by the strong hand and by proceedings which would probably be esteemed to constitute a *casus belli*, cannot impose upon the Papal Court the reforms which alone can enable Pio Nono to govern his subjects with his own unaided hand. Austria, it is said, and commonly believed, withholds if not refuses, this co-operation; and it is further complained of her that she concentrates forces upon her Sardinian frontier in a manner hazardous in the extreme to peace. There is no doubt that at present Austria does not stand well before the public. Her silence is an accusation, or at least a ground for accusation, and not an unfair one. These are questions which we have a right to put to both Governments, and to which we have a right to expect a clear and explicit reply. Will Austria co-operate with France in imposing upon the Pope a re-organization of his government and has France ever submitted to Austria a definite plan of Papal Reform? Europe has a right to ask for a distinct and truthful answer, and the sooner Austria adopts some mode of rendering it, the better for her reputation—the better for the preservation of peace. With regard to the allegations put forward by Sardinia in the Circular to her Diplomatic Agents, relative to the concentration of forces by Austria upon the Ticino, justice to Austria compels us to remind the public that her abstinence from taking this step in 1848 exposed her to serious disadvantage in the struggle which ensued, and which was commenced in the face of assurances of peaceful intentions, not a whit less strongly given than in 1858 and 1859. The burnt child dreads the fire, and Austria can scarcely be expected, after a lapse of no more than ten years, not to remember that in 1848 half her territories were overrun before she could meet her enemy, in consequence of her neglecting those precautions which Count Cavour represents as so aggressive in their spirit and in their demonstration.

It is in Count Cavour, in his personal position, in the national policy which that position in regard of his own interests imposes upon him, that we see far more than in the relative positions of France and Austria the

hazard of outbreak. In the Diplomatic Circular to which his signature is subscribed, although there is much that may be subject to argument and to controversy, there is nothing reprehensible in tone, or inconsistent with the principles of international law in substance. But the case is very different when we come to the consideration of the speech which he is reported to have made on the occasion of the debate upon the loan. When Count Cavour talks of the cries of suffering that come from Bologna and Naples, of the tears and groans of Milan being intercepted by the Alps and the Austrians, and of the cause of liberty and civilization ultimately flourishing, Count Cavour has evidently but one object in view, to stir up a rising in the Italian Provinces of Italy, and to have ready to his hand a pretext for war. The circular on the face of it has a decent appearance of a defensive character, but no ingenuity can put such a gloss upon the Speech. That is full of provocation, and sounds to "boot and saddle" as distinctly as did ever a trumpet on the lip of a soldier. Count Cavour is anxious for war, and will bring it about if he can by any means. We cannot doubt it. He has, by holding before his countrymen the *ignis fatuus* of Italian unity and visions of an enlarged and consolidated Sardinia, induced them to let him lead them into an accumulation of debt and a pressure of taxation that they must feel sorely. Angry at the reproaches that assail him, and alarmed for his own position, desperate of the present and reckless of the future, he sees no other issue from his difficulty than that which may be found in the chances of war. It is for the rest of Europe to show him that his wild designs are understood and that his selfish policy will be resolutely withstood.

PHILANTHROPY AND POLITICS.

It cannot fail to strike any one who goes over the history of the last half-century how strongly the philanthropic principle has come out as a practical public consideration—how, from being a beautiful idea, cherished in studies, it has become a political power, able to do things, to carry measures, to pull down and to build up, and make itself attended to. People used to object in their hearts to particular bad institutions, abuses, and neglects, but they had no idea that this inner moral sense could ever do any thing, but thought that the facts of the world were what they were, and that it was simple confusion to suppose that feeling could ever alter facts. Then came a set of men who were determined to show that feeling could do something; they were not men of gigantic ability by any means; their strong point was that they had faith in the morality of human nature. Thus

this principle, which had ranked as a mere sentiment and abstraction, began striking great blows; it abolished the Slave Trade, and in this empire Slavery altogether; it had a great hand in repealing the Corn Laws, which might have stood to this day had they had only the financial ground to appeal to; but multitudes who did not understand a word about political economy took in the benevolent argument. This principle has obviously had a great deal to do with moulding our Indian policy of the last twenty years. On the European area it combined with the classical element to erect the Kingdom of Greece. It is now an admitted member of the political circle, and one of the organizing and constructing forces of the day. The French Pamphlet that we published on Saturday furnishes a remarkable proof of the advance of this principle, and the new rank it occupies in the world. The Roman question is felt as so great a difficulty now that even a despotic Power like France can make political capital out of it. Why is it? Why, because it is the case of a people who are suffering under the infliction of an extravagantly bad Government, who would throw off that Government in a day if they were let alone, but who are not allowed to do this by the European Powers, some positively interfering, and others acquiescing in that interference. Now, this is a posture of things which would not have troubled the mind of a single eighteenth century statesman for one moment. Would the Harleys, the Walpoles, the Pulteneys, the Colberts, the Turgots, the Kaunitzes have cared one straw about the humor and fancy of a small State for being tolerably governed? The idea would not have occurred to them; the convenience of Europe required the temporal Papacy, and therefore no risks must be run about *that*; that was the only thing they would have thought of. Had any one suggested that it was a considerable hardship to a people to be governed upon this principle, because when an atrociously bad Government *knows* that Europe will not permit it to be endangered it is not very likely to improve,—“Oh, yes, I dare say it is, but it can't be helped,” would have been the answer. The “convenience of Europe” would thus have completely crushed at the very outset the slightest consideration of the rights or the interests of the inhabitants of the Roman States themselves, as a petty minor point that had no appreciable weight in the balance. But it is evident now that this question is not to be settled in this easy, off-hand way. Why? Because the philanthropic principle comes in; for by this principle we do not mean exclusively an interest in negroes and savages, but any feeling for the interests and rights of society, or any portion of it. This consideration,

we say, comes in now, forces its way, and will obtain a hearing. Even the French Emperor, for his own purposes, knowing its value, affects to recognize it, and the result is a complete state of suspense and perplexity as to the settlement of the Roman question. There would have been no suspense and no perplexity half a century ago about it. Now, whether people are willing or not to take the right steps—whatever they are—to settle it, they see that it is a dilemma, and that there is something to be got over in the systematic and deliberate absorption of the internal interests of a whole nation in the "convenience of Europe." The question forces itself up, "Have we a right to do this?" The European conscience is uneasy. Lord John Russell announces the principle that "the consent of *all* the contracting Powers of Europe" shall be necessary to the foreign occupation of the States of the Church. This is rather new doctrine. But, if we continue to leave the international ground as it is, still the two great Powers who consider this field exclusively their own find themselves amenable to the public feeling of Europe. They cannot, and apparently do not, expect that what is in itself a plain violation of justice—the artificial exclusion of one particular State and people from the blessings of good government—can, in the improved state of public feeling, go on forever being tolerated. Philanthropy is strong enough now to make it excessively awkward for them. Constant explanation and apology are necessary. The French Emperor is, indeed, taking an unjust advantage of this public feeling on the subject to turn the flank of Austria. There is no sympathy with such an abuse of public feeling, but it shows the strength of it that one of the two Powers concerned actually avails himself of it as a means to outflank his rival.—*Times*, 7 Feb.

ROMAN CATHOLIC NATIONS.

How comes it to pass that nation after nation in which the Romish priesthood is dominant perishes down to its roots with a steady and irresistible speed? From recent accounts, Mexico is fast becoming disorganized, disintegrated, and approaching nearer, every day, to utter and entire destruction. "Of Mexico," says the *Times*, "at the present hour it is difficult to the inhabitants of a civilized land to form an accurate notion, nor does any history treat of so sudden and rapid a decline." What, we ask again, accounts for this? It has a splendid climate and a prolific soil. Its children are many of them the sons of heroes and nobles, and its annals are by no means monotonous or dull. It has been linked to a monarchy, and separated and formed into a republic. It has endured

chains and enjoyed freedom. But in all its conditions it has known neither prosperity nor real social elevation. One marked feature it has. Its priesthood is by far the richest in Christendom. Its Church property is enormous. So strong are its ecclesiastical guardians, that when Juarez proposed to secularize a portion of it, in order to maintain the barest national life, the priests raised an army against him, and gained the day. What does all this wealth represent? A plundered people. What means this powerful priesthood? A prostrate Government. What is the necessary and logical result? Bankruptcy—confusion—civil discord—unmeaning insults on the flag of England, provoking retribution it is scarcely worth the necessary powder and shot to inflict. Finally, far-seeing minds discern for Mexico in the distance utter chaos or a powerful dictator. But is not every nation in which a superstitious Papal priesthood is dominant very much in the same condition? Spain has sunk daily during a century and a half in all that constitutes the glory of a government or the greatness of a people. Italy is become a byword in Europe, and its capital and its petty sovereignties, sometimes the pity, at other times the scorn, and never the admiration, of mankind. Austria, compared with the Protestant States of Germany, is the dungeon compared to a palace. The Roman Catholics of Mexico, Peru, and Brazil are centuries behind the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers in Massachusetts. Yet soil and sunshine and climate are all in favor of the former, and ice and rock and bleak land are all against the latter. Who would venture to place the poverty and sloth and idleness of Lower Canada on the same level as the energy and enterprise and increasing riches of Upper Canada, which is Protestant? The stagnation of a Romish canton in Switzerland contrasts powerfully with the tidiness and industry and intelligence of a contiguous Protestant canton. The light and intelligence and independence of Ireland are in Ulster. Her misery and beggary and brigandage, and her characteristic crimes are in Connaught, where we see every variety and similarity of features, political and physical; but where, beneath a dominant superstition, brooding and stamping the mark of its despotism over all, we discover a decaying race. But wherever we find the Protestant faith, even in its least favorable types and the worst of physical conditions, we witness a prosperous and advancing community. Our inference must be that of an eloquent, and in this case weighty and impartial, judge. Lord Macaulay thus writes in his *History* (vol. i. pp. 48-9):—

"During the last three centuries, to stunt

the growth of the human mind has been the chief object of the Roman Catholic Church. Throughout Christendom, whatever advance has been made in knowledge, in freedom, in wealth, and in the arts of life, has been made in spite of her, and has everywhere been in inverse proportion to her power. The loveliest and most fertile provinces of Europe have under her rule been sunk in poverty, in political servitude, and in intellectual torpor; while Protestant countries, once proverbial for sterility and barbarism, have been turned by skill and industry into gardens, and can boast of a long list of heroes, statesmen, philosophers, and poets. Whoever, knowing what Italy and Scotland naturally are, and what four hundred years ago they actually were, will now compare the country round Rome with

the country round Edinburgh, will be able to form some judgment as to the tendency of Papal domination."

We do not make these remarks in order to urge the exhibition or to stimulate the action of an intolerant spirit toward Mexico, but to remind our readers of the true solution of her misery. Her insults to our flag, and her violent aggressions on the lives and property of Englishmen, will no doubt bring down the retribution such misdeeds deserve. But in punishing we may try to discover from what seeds such pernicious fruits grow, and who are the seedsmen in spring whom weeping reapers follow in many a bitter harvest.—*The Press*, 12 February.

GENERAL HAMILTON.—A member of the family of the late Gen. Alexander Hamilton has handed us a copy of the subjoined letter from that distinguished soldier and statesman to his brother, which it is thought will possess interest for our readers:—

New York, June 22, 1785.

MY DEAR BROTHER:—I have received your letter of the 31st of May last, which, and one other, are the only letters I have received from you in many years. I am a little surprised you did not receive one which I wrote to you about six months ago. The situation you describe yourself to be in gives me much pain, and nothing will make me happier than, as far as may be in my power, to contribute to your relief. I will cheerfully pay your draft upon me for fifty pounds sterling, whenever it shall appear. I wish it was in my power to desire you to enlarge the sum; but though my future prospects are of the most flattering kind my present engagements would render it inconvenient to me to advance you a larger sum. My affection for you, however, will not permit me to be inattentive to your welfare, and I hope time will prove to you that I feel all the sentiment of a brother. Let me only request of you to exert your industry for a year or two more where you are, and at the end of that time I promise myself to be able to invite you to a more comfortable settlement in this country. Allow me only to give you one caution, which is to avoid if possible getting into debt. Are you married or single? If the latter, it is my wish for many reasons it may be agreeable to you to continue in that state.

But what has become of our dear father? It is an age since I have heard from him or of him, though I have written him several letters. Perhaps, alas! he is no more, and I shall not have the pleasing opportunity of contributing to render the close of his life more happy than the progress of it. My heart bleeds at the recollection of his misfortunes and embarrassments. Sometimes I flatter myself his brothers have extended their support to him, and that he now enjoys tranquillity and ease. At other times I

fear he is suffering in indigence. I entreat you, if you can, to relieve me from my doubts, and let me know how or where he is if alive; if dead, how and where he died. Should he be alive inform him of my inquiries, beg him to write to me, and tell him how ready I shall be to devote myself and all I have to his accommodation and happiness.

I do not advise your coming to this country at present, for the war has also put things out of order here, and people in your business find a subsistence difficult enough. My object will be, by and by, to get you settled on a farm.

Believe me always your affectionate friend and brother,
ALEX. HAMILTON

—*National Intelligencer*.

A ST. PETERSBURG journal has an article by which the public is informed of a great literary treasure now in the possession of the Imperial Library, at St. Petersburg. It contains nothing less than the records of the Bastille. When, during the French revolution, the rich literary stores of the destroyed Bastille, together with those of numberless abbeys and castles were dispersed to the winds, a Russian, of the name of Dubrowsky, who was attached to the Russian embassy at the court of Versailles, as translator, sacrificed the whole of his fortune in order to save of these treasures as much as possible. Dubrowsky, later, fell in poverty, but, for all that, and although a brilliant offer was made to him, it is said from England,—he did not part with his collection, but presented it, in 1800, to the Emperor Alexander, who rewarded him with a considerable donation and a pension for life. The collection was kept in the Imperial Library, and only a few small and particularly elegant volumes were transmitted to the Emperor's private library in the Hermitage. The following are the contents of this valuable collection:—Royal lettres de cachet; ordinances of the Ministers to the officers of the Bastille; notices and reports of the police-spies in reference to the prisoners; confiscated poems and prose works; poems and writings in prose, written in the Bastille; and, lastly, the records of that formidable and hated prison.

WARNINGS.

Beware, beware of witchery!

And fall not in the snare.

That lurks and lies in wanton eyes,

Or hides in golden hair:

For the Witch hath sworn to catch thee,

And her spells are on the air.

"Thou art fair, fair, fatal fair,

O Irene!"

What is it, what is it,

In the whispers of the leaves?

In the night wind, when its bosom,

With the shower in it, grieves?

In the breaking of the breaker,

As it breaks upon the beach

Thro' the silence of the night?

Cordelia! Cordelia!

A warning in my ear—

"Not here! not here! not here!"

But seek her yet, and seek her,

Seek her ever out of reach,

Out of reach, and out of sight!"

Cordelia!

Eyes on mine, when none can view me!

And a magic murmur thro' me!

And a presence out of Fairyland,

Invisible, yet near!

Cordelia!

"In a time which hath not been:

In a land thou hast not seen:

Thou shalt find her, but not now:

Thou shalt meet her, but not here!"

Cordelia! Cordelia!

"In the falling of the snow:

In the fading of the year:

When the light of hope is low,

And the last red leaf is sere."

Cordelia!

And my senses lie asleep, fast asleep,

O Irene!

In the chambers of this Sorceress, the South

In a slumber dim and deep,

She is seeking yet to keep,

Brim-full of poison'd perfumes,

The shut blossom of my youth.

O fatal, fatal fair Irene!

But the whispering of the leaves,

And the night wind, when it grieves

And the breaking of the breaker,

As it breaks upon the beach

Thro' the silence of the night,

Cordelia!

Whisper ever in my ear

"Not here! not here! not here!"

But awake, O wanderer! seek her

Ever seek her out of reach,

Out of reach, and out of sight!"

Cordelia!

There is a star above me

Unlike all the millions round it.

There is a heart to love me,

Altho' not yet I have found it.

And awhile,

O Cordelia, Cordelia!

A light and careless singer,

In the subtle South I linger,

While the blue is on the mountain,

And the bloom is on the peach,

And the fire-fly on the night,

Cordelia!

But my course is ever norward,

And a whisper whispers "Forward!"

Arise, O wanderer, seek her,

Seek her ever out of reach,

Out of reach and out of sight!

Cordelia!

Out of sight,

Cordelia! Cordelia!

Out of reach, out of sight,

Cordelia!

—Poems by Owen Meredith.

CALM.

THERE is a time when Nature sadden'd lies;

Not slumbering, but undisturb'd, in night,

Gazing aloft with all her flowers' eyes

Into the tranquil heaven's liquid light.

Then shows the distant landscape clear and fair,

And softly thrills the lone bird's simple song;

Sere leaves float silently amid the air,

And distant sounds glide echoless along.

There is a silence falls upon the sea,

When the impassioned storm has onward

swept,

As if the spirit of humanity

Had sunk in hopeful slumber as she wept.

Then scarce a crest upon the long, still waves,

In creamy foam comes bubbling o'er the

shells:

Low music murmurs in the rocky caves,

And the expanse in radiant stillness dwells.

There is a calm which comes upon the heart,

Shedding a sense of holiness around;

Assuaging pain, allaying throes and smart,

And tuning all its chords to tender sound.

It is not hope, nor patience; but the soul,

Exalted, yet resigned, feels one by one

Its passions ebb, and gazing on the goal,

Breathes the unconscious prayer, "Thy will

be done!"

—Household Words.

You ask a merrier strain of me,—

The shepherd pipe of Arcady,

The vintage hymn, the hunter's horn,

The reaper's carol from the corn!

Ah! small the choice of him who sings

What sound shall thrill the smitten strings;

Fate holds and guides the hands of Art,

And lips must answer to the heart.

In shadow now, and now in sun,

As runs the life the song must run;

But, glad or sad, to God's good end

Doubt not the varying streams shall tend.

J. G. W.

—Transcript.



